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DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME
OF THE *COMEDIE HUMAINE*:
DISTRIBUTION OF THE STORIES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

By
BRUCIA DEDINSKY

Private Edition, Distributed by
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Reprinted from

DARGAN and WEINBERG, Editors: *The Evolution of Balzac's "Comédie humaine"*
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Avant-propos.* In *Œuvres complètes*, éd. Conard, I, xxv-xxxviii.
- Béch.** Editions published by Mme Charles-Béchet.
- Char.** Editions published by Charpentier.
- Con.** Editions published by Louis Conard.
- Corr.* *Correspondance de H. de Balzac, 1819-1850* (*Œuvres complètes*, éd. Calmann-Lévy, Vol. XXIV).
- Corr. Carraud.* *Correspondance inédite avec Madame Zulma Carraud, 1829-1850*, éd. M. Bouteron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1935).
- Dum.** Editions published by Dumont.
- Fur.** Editions published by Furne, Dubochet et Hetzel.
- Gos.** Editions published by C. Gosselin.
- LEt.* *Lettres à l'Etrangère* (3 vols.; Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1899, 1906, 1933).
- LF.* *Letters to His Family*, ed. W. S. Hastings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934).
- Lov. Coll.* Lovenjoul Collection.
- Lov., Hist.* Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, Charles de, *Histoire des œuvres de H. de Balzac* (3d ed.; Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1888).
- Mame** Editions published by Mame et Delaunay-Vallée.
- MLN* *Modern Language Notes.*
- MP* *Modern Philology.*
- N.R.F.* *La Comédie humaine*, éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française (10 vols.; Paris, 1935-37).
- OC.* *Œuvres complètes*, éd. Calmann-Lévy (24 vols.; Paris, 1869-76).
- OD.* *Œuvres diverses*, Vols. XX-XXIII of OC.
- PMLA* *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.*
- RDM* *Revue des deux mondes.*
- RHL* *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France.*
- Sou.** Editions published by Hippolyte Souverain.
- Wer.** Editions published by Werdet.

* This abbreviation may refer to any work of Balzac published by the publisher named; for its exact meaning at any given place the reader is referred to the individual chapters.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME OF THE *COMÉDIE HUMAINE*: DISTRIBUTION OF THE STORIES

By BRUCIA L. DEDINSKY
George School, Pennsylvania

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

IN THE following study the investigator is confronted with several fundamental questions: Do we know exactly what is the genesis of the *Comédie humaine*? Did the author from the start have a clear conception of his work? Or was this work a matter of the gradual accumulation of stories, written or projected, together with groupings of stories under collective titles,¹ which ultimately led Balzac to the idea of assembling all of his works into a unit and placing them under one all-inclusive title? In answer to these questions this investigation proposes to discover how Balzac planned and built up his "monument" and to define the organic structure of the whole *Comédie humaine*.

The earliest grouping of novels made by Balzac was published in 1830, in two volumes under the collective title *Scènes de la vie privée*. From 1833 to 1848 he continually rearranged the classification of his stories. Several novels appearing first in one group of *Scènes* or *Études* were moved, either temporarily or permanently, to another group. Our main problem, then, is to trace the history of Balzac's individual works from the earlier alignment of stories under collective titles and, as a corollary, to follow up the new classifications and additions of stories under the all-inclusive title *La Comédie humaine*, as the author left it in August, 1850.

The question of Balzac's classification and arrangement of his works has been touched upon by many admirers and critics. Le Breton considered it of little importance to know "sous quelle rubrique il [Balzac] a classé ses œuvres."² B. W. Wells³ thought it time wasted to insist on a

¹ A "collective title" is a common title for volumes, published between 1830 and 1835, containing a group of stories similar in theme. Some of these titles are used, from 1834, to designate component parts of the *Études de mœurs*, and from 1842, parts of the *Comédie humaine*; therefore for the sake of clarity, as collective titles they will appear in italics, and as captions for divisions and subdivisions, in quotations.

² A. Le Breton, *Balzac, l'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 124.

³ *A Century of French Fiction*, pp. 88-186.

This study, which forms part of the volume entitled *The Evolution of Balzac's "Comédie humaine,"* edited by E. Preston Dargan and Bernard Weinberg (The University of Chicago Press, 1942), contains an occasional textual reference to the complete work.

classification that places a story in one series or another. On the other hand, Cabat emphasized the importance of knowing whether or not "la réunion de toutes les actions sous une même rubrique a sa raison d'être."⁴ With Cabat we believe that the question of classification has a direct bearing on the development of the scheme of the *Comédie humaine*. Therefore the writer will endeavor to explain these changes in classification. Were they usually to satisfy the demands of publishers? Or had Balzac at times more urgent reasons—the reasons of a master-builder who must create his own plan? In the course of this study I have usually found in the stories themselves some element which could be interpreted as a basis for the author's varied classifications.

The opinions concerning the evolution of the scheme of the *Comédie humaine* are many and varied. It would seem that Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Baschet, Brunetière, and others tend to treat the *Comédie humaine* as one consistent body, conceived in its entirety. Brunetière states that about 1834 "l'œuvre entière de Balzac [est] *confusément contemporaine* dans sa tête."⁵ But in 1834 Balzac had reached about the mid-stream of his career. What of the period before 1834? From what date did Balzac begin to carry the whole scheme in his mind? Brunetière is not sufficiently specific on this point; neither is Henry James,⁶ who also maintains that Balzac early saw his work as a whole. This view is shared by Le Breton, who contends that at first Balzac wrote "à peu près au hasard et sans vue d'ensemble"⁷ but that presently he had a sudden revelation of genius in which he saw "devant lui toute la *Comédie humaine*, comme une immense cité dont les toits et les clochers émergent soudain de la brume."⁸ Of course, Le Breton evidently refers to the events of 1833, but again what about the years before 1833? Le Breton, in his discussion of the "Genèse et plan de la *Comédie humaine*,"⁹ is cursory and general.

As early as 1864, however, Camille Chancel suggested that the *Comédie humaine* was a work of incubation and of slow development. The title of his article "La Genèse de la *Comédie humaine*"¹⁰ is, nevertheless, misleading, since it gives merely a list of Balzac's compositions and indicates his new and original tendencies in depicting contemporary life. This article

⁴ A. Cabat, *Etude sur l'œuvre d'Honoré de Balzac*, pp. 28-29.

⁵ F. Brunetière, *Honoré de Balzac*, p. 87. Italics ours.

⁶ *Notes on Novelists*, pp. 111 ff.; and *French Poets and Novelists*, pp. 77 ff.

⁷ Le Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-36.

¹⁰ *Revue de Paris*, old ser., Vol. I (June, July, August, 1864).

fails entirely to show the "genesis." Paul Flat,¹¹ J. Merlant,¹² and Ernst Curtius¹³ have treated the question of the genesis briefly and without specific details and have not materially advanced the knowledge of the problem. Other writers who knew Balzac personally—Félix Davin,¹⁴ Gabriel Richard,¹⁵ and Théophile Gautier¹⁶—seem to imply that the inception of the *Comédie humaine* was early and the growth slow. No one of these critics, however, has made a systematic and exhaustive study of the development of Balzac's scheme. The difficulty of the problem lies partly in the fact that the author published his work piecemeal and in a most bewildering variety of ways and partly in the lack of original documents recording his first steps. Only a chronological study of the novels and of the various classifications, therefore, can show the organic structure of the *Comédie humaine* and prove whether Balzac had from the beginning a clear conception of the whole scheme or whether he developed it by an evolutionary process.

The procedure in this investigation will be as follows: First, a chronological study (with a few inevitable exceptions) will be made of the volumes having collective titles, in the order of their publication up to 1833. After that date these volumes appeared in new alignments of stories, under collective titles—some new, some previously used—which now designate subdivisions; here again the treatment will be chronological. Then these stories, revised and enlarged, will be discussed as component parts of the *Comédie humaine*. Each story will be traced from its original place in those collective volumes to its final classification in the Conard edition of the *Comédie humaine*. Each classification or transference of a story from one grouping to another will be explained by textual analysis of the story under consideration. These shifts and final classifications will also be indicated by a table (p. 180).

The thirty-one years of Balzac's creative life are too many to be represented as on one plane of art and interest. His literary career, as a whole, falls into six definite stages, in spite of an inescapable overlapping of years. The first ten years comprise his apprenticeship; the last twenty must be divided into five periods, each distinguished by a paramount interest and marked by specific publications. Our study will be divided accordingly.

¹¹ *Essais sur Balzac*, I, 2-3.

¹² *Morceaux choisis de Honoré de Balzac*, pp. 36-39.

¹³ *Balzac, sein Leben, sein Werk*, chap. xii.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

¹⁴ *Lov., Hist.*, pp. 194-95.

¹⁶ *Honoré de Balzac*, p. 42.

II. BALZAC'S YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP: 1819-29

The works of Sir Walter Scott had doubtless a direct influence in suggesting the scheme of the *Comédie humaine*.¹⁷ Balzac himself wrote that the lack of unity and co-ordination in the Waverley novels led him to seek a new technique and a new system for unifying scattered compositions and welding them into a correlated whole. Balzac's aim was to give a history of contemporary manners—what he called “un drame à trois ou quatre mille personnages que présente une société.”¹⁸ In order to make this “drama” interesting, he strongly felt the need of a system, for, he said, it is not enough to observe and to depict, it is necessary to depict and to observe with a definite aim in mind.¹⁹ In March, 1830, while discussing a method of dealing with the numberless facts of history, Balzac states that they may be grouped under one general idea and then be classified and co-ordinated in order to show the “*enchaînement et la liaison qui en réunissent toutes les parties*.”²⁰ In 1835 Davin quoted Balzac as saying: “Le génie n'est complet que quand il joint, à la faculté de créer, la puissance de coordonner ses créations.”²¹ Moreover, Davin, Balzac's mouthpiece, tells in no uncertain terms: “Nous devons l'unité de cette œuvre à une réflexion que M. de Balzac fit de bonne heure sur l'ensemble des œuvres de Walter Scott.”²² Finally, in 1842, Balzac becomes even more explicit on the matter of organization. In discussing Scott's lack of system, he says: “En apercevant ce défaut de liaison, qui d'ailleurs ne rend pas l'Écossais moins grand, je vis à la fois le système favorable à l'exécution de mon ouvrage et la possibilité de l'exécuter.”²³ These statements plainly indicate the possible origin of Balzac's scheme.

Our next problem is to observe how Balzac achieved unity in his writings. First he conceived the happy idea of using the same characters in several novels. This device also might have been suggested by certain of the Waverley novels, in which Rob Roy, Claverhouse, and the Duke of

¹⁷ For a full discussion of the influence of Sir Walter Scott on Balzac, see E. Preston Dargan, “Scott and the French Romantics,” *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 599-629. See also F. Baldensperger, *Orientations étrangères chez Honoré de Balzac*, chap. iv.

¹⁸ *Avant-propos*, pp. xxviii ff.

¹⁹ Quoted by Félix Davin, “Introduction aux *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle*” (1835); reprinted in Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 46-64. References to this Introduction will be hereafter cited as “Lov., *Hist.*”

²⁰ *OD.*, III, 65. Italics ours.

²² *Ibid.* Italics ours.

²¹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 50. Italics ours.

²³ *Avant-propos*, I, xxix.

Argyle reappear, and where still others, such as Henry Wynd and Flora MacDonald, are mentioned by name only.²⁴ It is barely possible that this *procédé* might have been suggested by Fenimore Cooper's Leather-Stocking series. As late as 1840 Balzac particularly admired, so he said, "la grandeur, l'originalité de Bas-de-Cuir, ce sublime personnage *qui lie entre eux les Pionniers, les Mohicans, le Lac Ontario, la Prairie*."²⁵ However, the only novel of the Leather-Stocking series that Balzac could in all probability have known before he wrote *Annette et le criminel* (*Argow le pirate*) in 1824 was the *Pioneers*, which appeared in France on August 30, 1823.²⁶ Consequently, it is difficult to establish influence of Cooper at that early period.

Nevertheless, the first attempt to correlate novels by reappearing characters is made in *Le Vicaire des Ardennes*²⁷ and *Argow le pirate*²⁸ from the *Œuvres de jeunesse*.²⁹ In the Preface³⁰ to *Le Vicaire des Ardennes* Balzac states that the novel tends to become *en gros a cadre* into which the dramatized story is fitted. He hints at a plan for the co-ordination of a series of thirty projected novels in which characters will reappear.³¹ At the end of *Le Vicaire des Ardennes* Balzac announced, in a "Note," a novel, *Le Criminel*. This was first published as *Annette et le criminel* but became, in 1836, *Argow le pirate*.³² The connecting link between *Le Vicaire* and *Argow* is found in five reappearing characters.³³ Another linking device worthy of notice at that early period is a cross-reference by title to

²⁴ See Dargan, art. cit., *PMLA*, XLIX, 612-19.

²⁵ *La Revue parisienne*, July 25, 1840, pp. 69-70. Italics ours. See also Ethel Preston, *Recherches sur la technique de Balzac: Le Retour systématique des personnages dans la "Comédie humaine,"* p. 7. For a full discussion of Cooper's influence on Balzac, see E. Preston Dargan, "Studies in Balzac: I. Balzac and Cooper: *Les Chouans*," *MP*, XIII (1915), 193-213. See also F. Baldensperger, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-73; and Margaret Gibb, *Le Roman de Bas-de-Cuir: Etude sur Fenimore Cooper et son influence en France*, pp. 149-75.

²⁶ *Bibliographie de la France*, 1823; the *Last of the Mohicans* appeared in 1826, the *Prairie* in 1827, and the *Pathfinder* in 1840.

²⁷ 4 vols.; Paris: Pollet, 1822.

²⁸ 4 vols.; Paris: E. Buisson, 1824.

²⁹ Cf. Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 93. See also Bellessort, *Balzac et son œuvre*, p. 45.

³⁰ *Le Vicaire des Ardennes*, I, iv.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

³² *Lov., Hist.*, p. 256.

³³ They are: (1) Argow, or Maxendi, the leader of the rebels; (2) his accomplice, Vernyct; (3) M. de Saint-André, the admiral; (4) M. Badger, the banker; (5) Marguerite, the old priest's maid, who becomes the wife of the judge.

the *Vicaire des Ardennes*.³⁴ These two novels should therefore be considered as part of a correlated series, although the author had not as yet thought of a collective title. It is not unreasonable, then, to assume that in these novels originated, however vaguely, the method of relating stories through characters and cross-references.

During his later productive years Balzac borrowed some material from the *Œuvres de jeunesse*; for instance, *Eugénie Grandet*, *Melmoth réconcilié*, *Maître Cornélius*, and *Ursule Mirouët* all have their antecedents in the earlier novels.³⁵ According to his sister, Mme Surville,³⁶ young Balzac aspired to write a series of historical novels, each one characteristic of an epoch in the history of France. He definitely planned three; one, on a fifteenth-century theme, was to be entitled *Le Capitaine des Boutefeux*. This was never written, but the period chosen was later depicted in *Maître Cornélius*. The second projected novel, *Le Gars*, portraying the Chouannerie, actually appeared under the title *Les Chouans*. The publication of the third novel, *Les Trois Cardinaux, histoire du règne de Louis XIII*,³⁷ was announced for June 30, 1830.³⁸ Balzac wrote to his friend Mme Zulma Carraud,³⁹ on April 14, 1830, in terms which imply that he had begun the work; but in September, 1833, he tells her in another letter that the work is not finished. *Les Trois Cardinaux* never appeared, and no manuscript has been preserved. Of these three novels, therefore, probably only one, *Les Chouans*, was written. Nevertheless, this project is of great importance, because here Balzac first planned to cover a historical period in a series of novels with definite titles. This design is a positive step toward the formation of a plan for his writings after his somewhat vague announcement made in the Preface to the *Vicaire*.

³⁴ *Annette et le criminel*, III, 13.

³⁵ These borrowings will be indicated in the analyses of the novels.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

³⁷ See Octave Uzanne, "A travers l'Œuvre de H. de Balzac," *Les Zigzags d'un curieux* (1888), p. 161. He states that Balzac wanted to portray in this novel "le Père Joseph, dit l'Eminence Grise, Mazarin, et Richelieu." M. Bouteron, however, thinks that they were: "Mazarin, Dubois et le P. Joseph, l'Eminence grise de Richelieu"; cf. *Corr. Carraud*, p. 20.

³⁸ 2 vols., in octavo. See *Scènes de la vie privée* (1st ed., 1830), Vol. I. This announcement is printed at the end of the volume in the advertising pages. Cf. L.-J. Arrigon, *Les Débuts littéraires*, pp. 237, 268. See also Pierre Abraham, *Créatures chez Balzac*, pp. 68, 103.

³⁹ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 20.

In an unpublished manuscript, a fragment of a program,⁴⁰ now in the Lovenjoul Collection at Chantilly, Balzac planned new works: *La Physiologie du mariage*, *La Pathologie sociale*, and *La Monographie de la vertu*. These titles arrest our attention as being sociological rather than historical. He actually published between 1830 and 1831 a series of short "physiologies" or "pathologies." But the significant expression of this program, which must be considered as a basis and a background for the *Scènes de la vie privée* and later for the *Comédie humaine*, is *La Physiologie du mariage*.⁴¹ After perusing the *Physiologie*, we find that the *Scènes de la vie privée*, as well as certain types in the *Comédie humaine*, proceed at least in part from this work. The characters of Augustine de Sommervieux, of Mme Firmiani, and of the daughters of Père Goriot originate there; certain ideas in *Gloire et malheur* (*La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote*), in *Une Double Famille*, and in *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* are already expressed in the *Physiologie*. These facts seem to prove that *La Physiologie* was a basis for the novels which Balzac later arranged under the general title, *Scènes de la vie privée*. *La Physiologie du mariage* is in three parts, each with divisions and with subdivisions. Within the work at least eight cross-references to the component parts of the book may be noted. And it should be recalled here that this method plays a vital part in the *Comédie humaine*. The diction in the *Physiologie* also occasionally forecasts that of the author's future work. At the outset Balzac says that as "l'humble secrétaire de deux dames, il a, tout en accordant leurs observations, accompli plus d'une tâche."⁴² He also frequently refers to this work as an "Etude"; toward the end of the book we find a significant statement: "nous sommes parvenus au dernier cercle infernal de la divine comédie du mariage, nous sommes au fond de l'enfer."⁴³ It is noteworthy because it indicates at what an early date, 1824-29, Balzac had in mind the *Divine Comedy* of Dante.

A review of Balzac's apprenticeship (1819-29) reveals that these early writings profoundly influenced his later productions and supply a background for the *Scènes de la vie privée* and for the future *Comédie humaine*. The early signs of a plan or a system are found in the Preface to the

⁴⁰ Assigned by Lovenjoul to 1830. Lov. Coll., A 168, fols. 63-64. See below, p. 38.

⁴¹ For a full account of the genesis of this work, see Prioult, *op. cit.*, pp. 213 ff. See also below, p. 166.

⁴² *La Physiologie du mariage*, p. 13. Italics ours.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 332. Cf. the opening pages of *La Fille aux yeux d'or*, where Balzac describes Paris.

Vicaire des Ardennes (1822), in the "Avertissement" to *Le Gars* (1827) and its marginal notes, and in the fragmentary program of 1830.

III. FIRST CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD

APRIL, 1830—MARCH, 1833

Les Chouans opened for Balzac the road to fame. After this success, however, he turned from history and the past to the everyday life of the present—in the words of Mme Surville,⁴⁴ to "les mœurs de son époque." Contemporary life and manners became his field of observation, and so in the *Physiologie* he depicted the most intimate phases of private life. It is assumed, therefore, that about 1828 and 1829 the interest of Balzac was divided between the past and the life around him; or, as Helen Barnes (Wodrada) says, in a slightly different connection, "Balzac was pressing forward to the mark of socio-historical fiction."⁴⁵

Balzac's reading at that period included *Proverbes romantiques* by A. Romieu (1827); *Scènes contemporaines*⁴⁶ by Romieu, Loève-Veimars, and Vanderburch (1828); and Henri Monnier's *Scènes populaires*,⁴⁷ which appeared in 1830. These works portray the customs and manners of the times, and they were evidently suggestive models for the *Scènes de la vie privée*. It is interesting to note that the term *Scène* was much in vogue; furthermore, the use of the term appealed to Balzac's interest in dramatic form. Paul Barrière emphasizes the fact that Balzac began his literary career with a drama—that he was haunted by the "enchaînement des scènes" and the logical development of action. By nature, Barrière avers, Balzac had "l'esprit de suite, d'organisation."⁴⁸

By 1830 Balzac had written a great number of stories, some of which had appeared, often in a fragmentary form, in the leading periodicals. Out of these tales he selected six, two of which, *Gloire et malheur* and *La Paix du ménage*, had never appeared before, and published them in April, 1830, under the collective title *Scènes de la vie privée*;⁴⁹ the negotiations for the publication, however, started on October 22, 1829.⁵⁰ Here, for the

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴⁵ *A Study of the Variations between the Original and the Standard Editions of Balzac's "Les Chouans,"* p. 6.

⁴⁶ Announced in the *Bibliographie de la France*, June 27, 1827. *Proverbes romantiques* and *Scènes contemporaines* were printed by Balzac in 1827 and 1828, respectively.

⁴⁷ L.-J. Arrigon, *Les Années romantiques de Balzac*, pp. 6, 66.

⁴⁸ *Honoré de Balzac et la tradition classique*, p. 198.

⁴⁹ 1st ed.; 2 vols.; Paris: Mame et Delaunay-Vallée.

⁵⁰ Lov. Coll., A 268, fols. 38-39.

first time, all the tales appeared in complete form. Each of these *Scènes* contains a character study of a young woman, while married life is the main theme; these stories continue the studies begun in the *Physiologie*. Balzac himself confirms this idea in a letter dated October 5, 1831, to his friend the Duchess of Castries:

Immédiatement après [*La Physiologie*], je fis, pour développer [*sic*] mes pensées et les jeter [*sic*] dans les âmes jeunes par de frappans tableaux, les *Scènes de la Vie privée*. Dans cet ouvrage, tout de morale et de sages conseils, rien n'est détruit, rien n'est attaqué; je respecte les croyances auxquelles je n'ai pas foi. Je suis historien et jamais la vertu ne fut plus préconisée que dans ces *Scènes*.⁵¹

This passage shows Balzac's objective point of view and his aim at that time.

This is Balzac's first grouping of tales under a collective title, and it is of prime importance because it is the foundation for future enlargement and building up. Pierre Abraham aptly speaks of the title *Scènes de la vie privée* as "ce titre annonciateur de toute l'œuvre future,"⁵² because a large number of stories and novels followed in the wake of the first edition of these *Scènes* and eventually were classed in subdivisions with similar general titles. The two volumes under consideration were given to the public April 13, 1830. The first volume contained a preface and three tales: *La Vendetta*, *Les Dangers de l'inconduite* (*Gobseck*), and *Le Bal de Sceaux*. The three tales of the second volume are: *Gloire et malheur* (*La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote*), *La Femme vertueuse* (*Une Double Famille*), and *La Paix du ménage*. The "Note" concluding the volume seems to be both a self-defense and an explanation of the author's technique. He states that invention is the distinctive feature of talent and that detail constitutes the merit of the novel.

The Preface to the first edition of these *Scènes* is important because in it Balzac gives his reasons for collecting, under a general title, stories with the same theme. Each of these six tales has been built around the fundamental principle that the romantic ideas and inexperience of young people bring disaster in their married lives. Young people, he says, are sincere and eager for happiness, but their obstinacy and lack of common sense result in misfortunes. His aim, he continues, is to depict faithfully the events which precede and follow marriage, inventing nothing, but only returning to the world what he had taken from it. These stories, he maintains, present true pictures of bourgeois home life, which are usually concealed from the casual observer. Balzac realized, as did no other writer

⁵¹ *Correspondance de Balzac avec la duchesse de Castries*, pp. 3-4.

⁵² Balzac: *Recherches sur la création intellectuelle*, p. 28.

of his day, the wealth of material offered by the French family circle and its customs. He drew into the limelight hidden thoughts, feelings, and interests of the family and of the individual. Concerned with manners and morals, he pleads for the education of women; he demands for them "une éducation solide sans nulle pédanterie,"⁵³ since, he believes, this will lead to a better understanding of matrimony and life in general and will better prepare for such experience the young women who will later appear "sur la scène sociale." These short narratives in which he pictures domesticity he appropriately compares to sketches of the Dutch school in their details regarding private and intimate life. With their common theme of the inner family sphere these stories are strung like beads on the same thread. Five of them are gloomy examples of unhappy marriages with tragic endings; *La Paix du ménage* is the only one with a happy conclusion.

The first story of this collection, *La Vendetta*,⁵⁴ is the tale of a blood-feud between two Corsican families. Baron Piombo learns that his daughter Ginevra loves Luigi, the scion of the Porta family. Neither of the young people has known of the feud. The strong wills of the father and the daughter now clash. The Baron, blinded by a passion equal in intensity to that of Goriot, but lacking in the self-sacrifice and utter devotion of the latter,⁵⁵ drives out Ginevra, who dies of privation. Since this is a study of affection and passion within the privacy of a family circle, the tale fittingly belongs in this grouping of the *Scènes de la vie privée*. When, in 1834, Balzac used this collective title to designate the first subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle*, the story naturally remained in its original category.

Les Dangers de l'inconduite,⁵⁶ finally entitled *Gobseck*, is also a study of

⁵³ *Scènes de la vie privée* (1st ed.), I, 1.

⁵⁴ The first chapter of this story was published in *La Silhouette*, April 1, 1830; another fragment, according to Lov., *Hist.*, p. 11, appeared in *Le Courrier des électeurs*, May 9, 1830. However, a verification by N. E. Saxe shows that *Le Courrier des électeurs* was published only from January 9, 1829, to April, 1830 (courtesy N. E. Saxe). After its publication in the collection under consideration, *La Vendetta* reappeared in the successive editions of the *Scènes de la vie privée* (2d ed., 1832; 3d ed., 1835; 4th ed., 1839; 5th ed., 1842). It is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

⁵⁵ Cf. Bellessort, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

⁵⁶ The first chapter, "L'Usurier," was published in *La Mode*, March 6, 1830 (error in Lov., *Hist.*, p. 26; courtesy N. E. Saxe). The complete tale appeared in the collection under consideration as well as in its 2d ed. In 1835 and 1839 it appeared in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; in 1842 it was again in the "Scènes de la vie privée." It is now in *Con.*, Vol. V.

an unhappy household. The original title indicates that the interest is centered on morals; it suggests the private life of the leading feminine character, the Comtesse de Restaud. The tale is, therefore, in keeping with the author's intentions as expressed in the Preface to this collection. In 1835 Balzac temporarily moved the narrative, with the new title, *Papa Gobseck*, to the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*, "Scènes de la vie parisienne." The new title shifts the interest to Gobseck, who, says Davin, personifies "l'avarice intelligente, puissante, haineuse."⁵⁷ It is possible that this temporary misplacement was due merely to the practical reason that Balzac did not have, at that time, enough stories with Parisian atmosphere to fill the four volumes of the additional subdivision. This view is supported by the fact that, in 1842, in the Furne edition, the story, now under the shortened title *Gobseck*, was permanently restored to its original group, "Scènes de la vie privée," where it naturally belongs. It is the story not only of the private life of the usurer Gobseck but also of the unhappy marriage of the countess and of the serious question of family inheritance.

*Le Bal de Sceaux, ou Le Pair de France*⁵⁸ is the study of a haughty heroine, Emilie de Fontaine, who scorns her lover, Maximilien Longueville, for his humble employment. He rises later in social standing and then, in turn, scorns her. Out of spite she marries her great-uncle, Count Kergarouët, who can give her the luxury and the social prestige which she is seeking. But Balzac says that her "luxe cachait imparfaitement le vide et le malheur de son âme souffrante," because, he explains: "Ce fut ainsi que l'influence exercée sur Emilie par une funeste éducation, tua deux fois son bonheur naissant et lui fit manquer toute son existence."⁵⁹ The sad tale of the unsuitable marriage and of the empty existence of the young woman forms an integral part of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, in which the author definitely placed it.

*Gloire et malheur (La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote)*⁶⁰ was written in Oc-

⁵⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 61.

⁵⁸ A verification by W. S. Hastings indicates an error in Lov., *Hist.*, p. 144. The complete story, with the subtitle *Le Pair de France*, was published first in the *Scènes de la vie privée* (1st ed.) and later in the successive editions of these *Scènes*. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. I.

⁵⁹ *Scènes de la vie privée* (1st ed., 1830), I, 392, 396.

⁶⁰ A fragment of this story was published in *La Silhouette*, April 15, 1830. The complete story appeared in the collection now under discussion with the title *Gloire et malheur*—a title which it retained in the 2d, 3d, and 4th eds. of these *Scènes*. In the 5th ed. (Furne) it was published under its present title. The story is now in *Con.*, Vol. I.

tober, 1829, while Balzac was visiting at the Château de Maffiers, the home of Mme d'Abrantès. It is a study of quiet family life and of the marriage, beyond her station, of a merchant's daughter. Balzac contrasts the happiness of a young *bourgeoise* who has accepted "un mariage de raison" with the wretchedness of her sister, who married, against the wishes of her family, an artist, a man of a higher class and of a different outlook. The first title of the tale suggests the rise and fall in the life of Augustine; the second includes the home and the shop—in fact, a whole household consisting of the members of the family as well as the apprentices—and seems to indicate a sociological preoccupation on the part of the author. It is clear, therefore, that the story rightfully belongs to the *Scènes de la vie privée*, in which it was placed from the beginning.

*La Femme vertueuse (Une Double Famille)*⁶¹ is built upon lines similar to those of the preceding story. The plot rises to the point of adultery and then gradually falls. Roger de Granville's marriage was a failure, partly because of his overvirtuous wife and partly because of his own intolerance. He disobeyed social laws and, consequently, suffered. The main theme of the story, frustrated happiness within the home, harmonizes perfectly with the basic idea of Balzac's grouping in the *Scènes de la vie privée*. In November, 1835, he moved the story temporarily to the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*, where it remained in the 1839 edition. An explanation for this shift may be found in the author's "Avis" to the first edition of this new subdivision. He states that the "calculs de l'auteur ont été dérangés par l'exécution de plusieurs scènes."⁶² Balzac is not always clear in his explanations of shifts of stories. Here the term "exécution" probably means literally the execution or the process of writing rather than the completion of the tale. The author often planned the classification of projected, but as yet unwritten, works. *La Torpille*⁶³ is a case in point; it was assigned to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" in 1835 but was not written at the time of their publication. Consequently, he filled the pages destined for *La Torpille* with the story *La Femme vertueuse*; ultimately, he restored *La Femme vertueuse* to the "Scènes de la vie privée" but gave it a new title, *Une Double Famille*, which is even more in harmony with the guiding thought of these Scenes.

⁶¹ A fragment of this story, "La Grisette parvenue," appeared in *Le Voleur*, April 5 and 15, 1830. The complete story was published in the first two editions of the collection under consideration. In 1835 and 1839 it appeared in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." In 1842 it was restored to its original category and is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

⁶² *OD.*, III, 392.

⁶³ Part I of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*.

La Paix du ménage,⁶⁴ written at the home of Mme de Berny in 1829, is a domestic episode cleverly told. Arrigon⁶⁵ suggests that the subject was inspired by "L'Aventure du diamant," a tale from the collective volume, *Les Amusemens sérieux et comiques d'un Siamois*, by Charles Rivière du Fresny (1699). The scene of Balzac's story is a ball at which a young wife learns of her husband's fancy for a "femme légère" by recognizing her own gift to her husband, a diamond ring, on the finger of a stranger. In consequence her happy marriage is on the verge of dissolution when a friend, an older woman, brings about "la paix du ménage." This sketch remained in the "Scènes de la vie privée" for obvious reasons.

From the foregoing discussion we observe that, of the six stories assembled under the first collective title, four have permanently and two⁶⁶ have ultimately, after a temporary displacement, remained in the "Scènes de la vie privée"—the general title which was later given to the first subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle*. The final classification of these stories as early as 1830 proves that the assembling of the tales was not done in a haphazard way but rather according to the pivotal theme which Balzac had established in his "Préface" to the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*.

About a month after the appearance of these *Scènes*, on May 8, 1830, Balzac published in *La Mode* a short story, *Les Deux Rêves*, which is his first conception of the later *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, Part III. At the end of this story was a "Note," as follows:

Ce morceau est l'un des plus importants que contiendra un livre auquel M. de Balzac travaille depuis longtemps et qui a pour titre: *Scènes de la Vie politique*. Cet ouvrage, digne de l'auteur des *Scènes de la Vie privée*, fait partie d'une collection remarquable publiée par la Maison Mame et Delaunay-Vallée. Nous avons déjà fait connaître à nos abonnés *el Verdugo*, extrait des *Scènes de la Vie militaire*.⁶⁷

Since the *Scènes de la vie politique* and the *Scènes de la vie militaire* did not yet exist, we are reminded that one cannot always trust Balzac's enthusiastic announcements. We note, however, his claim that the story *Les Deux Rêves*⁶⁸ was an extract from a projected work, the *Scènes de la*

⁶⁴ This story first appeared in the *Scènes de la vie privée* (1st ed.); there it remained in all the subsequent editions. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

⁶⁵ *Les Années romantiques de Balzac*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ See table (p. 180).

⁶⁷ *Lov., Hist.*, pp. 189-90.

⁶⁸ This story never entered the *Scènes de la vie politique* but was ultimately classified in the *Etudes philosophiques* as part of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*.

vie politique, parallel to the *Scènes de la vie privée*. From a third collective volume, the proposed *Scènes de la vie militaire*, one extract, *El Verdugo*, had previously been published in January, 1830. It appears, therefore, that during 1830 three groups of *Scènes*, not yet regarded as subdivisions, had been already tentatively projected and their titles chosen. Of these, only the *Scènes de la vie privée*, as has been shown, had actually seen the light of day. The choice of these three collective titles, as well as the stories in one case and the extracts in the other two cases, show that the idea of selective grouping was an early one, destined to a very gradual growth; it proves, furthermore, that the author at that time obviously intended to extend the range of his writings according to plans which had begun to take concrete forms. These facts warrant the dating of Balzac's tentative programs as of 1830, although their nebulous origin, as shown above, goes back to 1822.

The *Romans et contes philosophiques*⁶⁹ were the result of Balzac's keen interest in pseudo-scientific, fantastic,⁷⁰ mystical, and philosophical trends of thought. The origin of this interest may be traced to the readings of his youth. Mme Surville tells how he assimilated "tout ce qu'il y avait d'idées" in his mother's books on religion and mysticism—books by Saint-Martin, Swedenborg, Jacob Boehme, and Mme Guyon.⁷¹ This bent toward the occult was encouraged by his mother, who knew "les magnétiseurs et les somnambules célèbres de cette époque."⁷² Félix Davin asserts that young Balzac toiled in his lonely garret from 1818 to 1820, "à comparer, analyser, résumer les œuvres que les philosophes et les médecins de l'antiquité, du moyen âge et des deux siècles précédents, avaient laissé [sic] sur le cerveau de l'homme. Cette pente de son esprit est une prédilection."⁷³ At this time Balzac also read and re-read the works of Gall and Lavater,⁷⁴ who, from the twentieth-century point of view, are, per-

⁶⁹ Published by Charles Gosselin in 3 vols., September, 1831.

⁷⁰ For Balzac's great interest in the fantastic and in Ernst Theodore Hoffmann, see Baldensperger, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-11 *et passim*. Cf. Prioult, *op. cit.*, pp. xii, 300. Prioult emphasizes the influence of François-Benoît-Henri Hoffman, playwright.

⁷¹ Balzac's indebtedness to several of these writers is worked out by P. Bernheim, *Balzac und Swedenborg, Einfluss der Mystik Swedenborgs und Saint-Martins auf die Romandichtung Balzacs*. See also Baldensperger, *op. cit.*, chap. ix.

⁷² Surville, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁷³ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 196.

⁷⁴ F. J. Gall, *Anatomie et physiologie du système nerveux en général et du cerveau en particulier* (4 vols., 1810-19). Also J. G. Lavater, *Physiognomonie* (4 vols., 1781-1803).

haps, only pseudo-scientists.⁷⁵ On August 20, 1822, Balzac informed his sister Laure that he had bought ten volumes of a "superbe Lavater."⁷⁶

Although the fantastic and the supernatural early exercised a fascination for Balzac,⁷⁷ a lively interest in people and in the life around him, as well as his poverty, forced the young author to abandon these metaphysical meditations and turn to reality and the type of fiction demanded by the public. His varied interests—the pseudo-scientific, the mystical, and the social—seem to crowd each other in his teeming brain. Partly as a consequence of this, he seldom composed or published one single story at any given time. For example, in March, 1835, he wrote Mme de Castries: "J'ai une espèce de coquetterie littéraire qui me conseille de faire paraître à la fois, *Melmoth réconcilié*, *Séraphita*, *le Lys dans la vallée*, *la Fille aux yeux d'or*, *la Fleur-des-pois*."⁷⁸ Thus he wrote as fancy led him, or else as the publisher required. Often, in the midst of a fantastic tale he would start a story dealing with private life, continue another depicting life in the provinces, and perhaps finish a fourth laid in the capital, writing and publishing, almost concurrently, historical, realistic, and philosophical fiction. This situation is evident from the coinciding dates of composition of the *Scènes de la vie privée* and of the *Romans et contes philosophiques*. He never lacked subjects, and he regretted not having a comrade who could develop, as he said, "les sujets que je conçois et qui reviennent trop en foule pour que je fasse tout."⁷⁹

In Balzac's readings and interests mentioned above are the origins of his *Romans et contes philosophiques* and of the subsequent *Etudes philosophiques*. It would be well to establish from the start a clear understanding of what our author meant by "philosophique." A Balzacian philosophical story is frequently one which rests upon a mystical or supernatural idea; for example, the conception of human aspiration toward perfection in *Séraphita*; or in *La Peau de chagrin* the magic shrinking of the ass's skin upon every expressed desire of its owner. Such fantastic subjects, however, seemed to interest Balzac only so far as they revealed, or had a

⁷⁵ For a valuable discussion of the influence of these men on Balzac, see G. M. Fess, *The Correspondence of Physical and Material Factors with Character in Balzac*.

⁷⁶ LF., p. 66.

⁷⁷ See *Œuvres de jeunesse: Le Centenaire, ou Les Deux Béringheld* (1822), and *La Dernière Fée* (1823).

⁷⁸ "Cahiers balzaciens," VI, 35.

⁷⁹ Letter to M. Victor Ratier, July, 1830. Quoted by Crépet, Preface to *Pensées, sujets, fragmens*, p. xviii.

bearing upon, human nature; for, above all else, he was an analytical observer of life.

*La Peau de chagrin*⁸⁰ is Balzac's first "roman philosophique." Soon after its publication he revealed the importance of this novel in a letter to the editor of *L'Avenir*, Comte Charles de Montalembert, August, 1831.

Elle [*La Peau de chagrin*] est donc le *point de départ* de mon ouvrage. Après viendront se grouper, de nuance en nuance, les individualités, les existences particulières, depuis la plus humble jusqu'à celle du Prêtre, derniers termes de notre société. Dans ces tableaux, je suivrai les *effets de la pensée* dans la vie ...⁸¹

There is a double significance in this statement. First, the author has sketched again the subjects of his future works for which *La Peau de chagrin* was to be the starting-point. This intention is reiterated in a letter to Mme de Castries of October 5, 1831: "... cet ouvrage [*La Peau de chagrin*] n'est pas destiné à rester seul; il est, pardonnez-moi cette scientifique expression, les premisses d'un ouvrage que je serai fier d'avoir tenté."⁸² He emphasized the fact that the story was not an isolated piece of writing; his statements indicate that the novel was to serve as a nucleus for other *romans philosophiques*. Second, he has indicated to Comte de Montalembert "la pensée" as giving motive force for a group of stories, in supplying "le fil conducteur" for them. It is a specific form of "pensée," an exaggeration of any given thought; mania in scientific research; "desmesure" of pride in family name; excess of pleasure, of joy, sorrow, remorse, miserliness; extreme zeal in perfecting one's art. It is Balzac's firm conviction that thought which becomes an obsession ravages the mind. This is the basic idea in his philosophical tales and later in his *Etudes philosophiques*.

Balzac also left some information concerning *La Peau de chagrin* in his daily journal.⁸³ This was an oblong album, the size of a small notebook, in which Balzac jotted down fleeting thoughts, subjects for his work, fragments, names, etc. His explanation of the novel shows that, while he remained interested in actuality, his approach was to be philosophical and that he was endeavoring to work out a formula of human life. His definition is as follows: "*La Peau de chagrin*. L'Expression pure et simple de

⁸⁰ Published by Charles Gosselin and Urbain Canel in 2 vols., August, 1831.

⁸¹ *Revue bleue*, 4th ser., XX (1903), 609. Italics ours.

⁸² "Cahiers balzaciens," VI, 4.

⁸³ A copy of the journal is, at present, at Chantilly in the Lovenjoul Collection, A 181. It has been published, not always accurately, with a Preface and notes by Jacques Crépet (1910).

la vie humaine en tant que vie et que mécanisme. Formule exacte de la machine humaine. Enfin l'individu décrit et jugé [illegible] mais poétiquement."⁸⁴ Of this formula, Balzac had spoken earlier (1830) in connection with the projected treatise on social pathology,⁸⁵ from which the following passage summarizes with curious verbosity the ideas of the projected work:

Le 3^e ouvrage est cette *Pathologie sociale ou méditations mathématiques et physiques et transcendantes* sur les manifestations de la pensée prise dans toutes les formes que lui donne l'Etat Social soit par le vivre et le couvert soit par la démarche et la parole et etc. ... Le titre bizarre en apparence est justifié par une observation qui m'est commune avec Brillat-Savarin.⁸⁶ L'Etat de Société a fait de nos besoins, de nos plaisirs, de nos nécessités autant de plaies de maladies par les excès auxquels nous nous portons poussés par nos goûts mais surtout par le développement [*sic*] que leur donne la pensée. Il n'y a rien aujourd'hui où elle ne se trahisse. De là ce titre. En effet là où il n'y a pas maladie physique, il y a maladie morale. ... C'était donc un ouvrage de la plus haute importance que de rechercher les lois de cette existence extérieure et les ramener à une expression philosophique ...

He asserts that his intention is to examine how "l'homme social est fait."⁸⁷ This passage shows that Balzac endeavored to discover the laws of the outer existence and from them to deduce a philosophical axiom which became a basic conception. It is this: Ideas and passions by continual fermentation become the active dissolvents of the individual and, consequently, of society; or, in other words, thought can produce destructive effects in the lives of men.⁸⁸ This principle, says Davin,⁸⁹ is poetically formulated in *La Peau de chagrin*, a work in which the author considered man as an organism which may be destroyed by passion. Here the formula is: "La vie décroît en raison directe de la puissance des désirs ou de la dissipation des idées."⁹⁰ The life of Raphaël de Valentin, the hero of the novel, demonstrates this principle and serves as the starting-point for the tales in the collective volumes, *Romans et contes philosophiques*.

The history of the publication of *La Peau de chagrin* is given by H. H. Millott.⁹¹ The novel deals with the field of moral philosophy and depicts,

⁸⁴ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 19. Crépet does not print the illegible words.

⁸⁵ See above, p. 28.

⁸⁶ Author of *La Physiologie du goût* (1826).

⁸⁷ Lov. Coll., A 168, fols. 63-64.

⁸⁸ Balzac's term, *la pensée*, is taken in a broad sense to include passion, as an obsession.

⁸⁹ Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 201, 203.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁹¹ See Dargan, Crain, and Others, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

interprets, and reduces human life to a formula conceived according to a philosophical principle. In Balzac's words to the Duchesse de Castries, the novel was also to "formuler le siècle actuel, notre vie, notre égoïsme."⁹² The motivation of the story is egoism operating in a sensual and over-refined society. Uncontrolled desire, excess in passion, and self-centered thought lead Raphaël de Valentin to destruction. The talented student, not being able to attain the complete satisfaction of his intense soul and senses, is on the verge of suicide when he comes into possession of the small skin of a wild ass, which has the magic power of miraculously granting its owner's wishes—at the price of shortening his life. It shrinks with every expressed desire, thus symbolically representing Raphaël's ebbing life. In a last effort to prolong this life Raphaël attempts to exercise no will—an unnatural situation against which his physical nature revolts until death is the solution. It is easy to see, then, why Balzac designated *La Peau de chagrin* a *roman philosophique* in its first publication in book form and in 1835 placed it permanently in the *Etudes philosophiques*,⁹³ of which it is an integral part.

It is necessary to return to the letter addressed to the Comte de Montalembert in which, in addition to his comments on *La Peau de chagrin* and the *Romans et contes philosophiques*, Balzac discussed a proposed work, *Histoire de la succession du marquis de Carabas*. This project, although often mentioned by the author, was never carried out. The work, he says,

formulera la vie des nations, les phases de leurs gouvernements, et, sous une forme meilleure, démontrera évidemment que les politiques tournent dans le même cercle et sont évidemment stationnaires. ... Je vous expose succinctement *mon plan*, afin de faire excuser le retard que j'ai mis à vous offrir une œuvre incomplète encore.⁹⁴

The question arises as to what Balzac meant by "mon plan"; certainly it was not yet *the* scheme which gradually evolved from these tentative beginnings into that explained in his "manifesto" of 1842. He must mean merely the scope and range of subjects he will treat in his books discussed in the letter to Montalembert. They will deal with contemporary life, representing almost every stratum of society, as well as with the whole nation in her political and governmental functions.

⁹² "Cahiers balzaciens," VI, 4.

⁹³ *Wer.*, Vols. I-IV. In 1845 the novel entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIV, and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVII.

⁹⁴ *Revue bleue*, 4th ser., XX (1903), 609-10. Italics ours.

Meanwhile the collective volumes, *Romans et contes philosophiques*, were published in September, 1831. Balzac entreated Mme de Castries to read these tales and added: "Sous le titre de *Romans et contes philosophiques* j'ai un peu avancé dans mon plan."⁹⁵ By this he means that in these collective volumes he has carried out the intention, expressed earlier, to group *La Peau de chagrin* with tales of similar theme. The stories were headed by Philarète Chasles's Introduction,⁹⁶ to which Balzac alluded in the above-mentioned letter in these words: "Il [Chasles] a bien voulu soulever le voile de ma pensée intime et future." In this Introduction Chasles also speaks of a plan: "Ce vaste plan, caché sous ces fantaisies, a dû échapper à plusieurs yeux." He then enumerates the possible subjects included in Balzac's vast program. "Le paysan, le mendiant, le pâtre, le bourgeois, le ministre, ... le roi et le prêtre ... tous les degrés de l'échelle sociale,"⁹⁷ will be depicted, he continues, in situations showing the destructive effects of egoism. This outline, like those given in the "Avertissement" and in the fragmentary program of 1830, as well as in the announcement of the same year, was a fresh attempt to establish a guiding principle for Balzac's writings. To be sure, these earlier plans are tentative and last only until a new one is drawn up. Nonetheless, the persistent and direct references to plans, together with the two published collective works, *Scènes de la vie privée* and *Romans et contes philosophiques*, and the projected titles *Scènes de la vie militaire* and *Scènes de la vie politique*, give evidence of Balzac's need of a system or scheme. Clearly, unity had to be created in the increasing number of his works. One conjectures that out of these tentative programs eventually was generated *the one scheme* carried through in the *Comédie humaine*.

It is pertinent now to analyze the contents of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* in order to see how they were connected with *La Peau de chagrin* and how many of them remained in the original grouping.

The success of *La Peau de chagrin* in August, 1831, was so great that Gosselin immediately proposed a new edition of the novel to be enlarged by twelve philosophical tales under the collective title *Romans et contes philosophiques*.⁹⁸ These additions were considered, says Balzac, "comme le complément nécessaire du système philosophique développé dans la

⁹⁵ "CaLiers balzaciens," VI, 4.

⁹⁶ Reprinted in Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 171-77. It is very probable that this Introduction was written under the influence of Balzac. See *LF.*, p. 111, n. 3.

⁹⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 176.

⁹⁸ Published by Charles Gosselin in 3 vols., in octavo.

Peau de chagrin.⁹⁹ Chasles in his Introduction emphasized the fact, let us repeat, that, according to Balzac, a thought carried to the extreme is the cause of the disruption of man as an individual and as an "être social." This principle becomes the unifying "fil conducteur" in the twelve stories; these, with the exception of *Jésus-Christ en Flandre*, had appeared at intervals since 1830 in the leading periodicals.

The scene of *Sarrasine*¹⁰⁰ is laid in Italy. Wells¹⁰¹ suggested that Balzac may have borrowed from the memoirs of Casanova. The study of Professor Henri David¹⁰² establishes the indebtedness of Balzac to these memoirs in three specific respects: the name of the Théâtre d'Argentina where La Zambinella performed, the motif of a man singing the parts of a prima donna, and the idea of a man's almost womanly beauty. Professor David also formulates the theme of the story as "la puissance d'illusion qu'exerce la beauté." Charles de Bernard¹⁰³ justifies the temporary placing of the story in the collection under consideration by saying that "d'une idée il [Balzac] fait un drame," implying that an illusion which became an *idée fixe* was the cause of tragedy in the life of Ernest-Jean Sarrasine. The author's intention concerning this story was changing concurrently with his growing preoccupation with devising a scheme for the unity of his works. Thus, while at Aix, he wrote to his publisher, Mame,¹⁰⁴ in September, 1832, indicating the principle which he followed in grouping his stories under collective titles. He said that he would withdraw from the present collection certain stories, among which were *Sarrasine* and *Etude de femme*, because they were not sufficiently "philosophiques."¹⁰⁵ Curiously enough, on the same day, September, 1832, he wrote to Gosselin giving additional reasons for the removal of the story in question. He stated that he intended to "supprimer *Etude de femme* et *Sarrasine*. ... Les deux

⁹⁹ OD., III, 405.

¹⁰⁰ This tale first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, November 21 and 28, 1830. After its publication in the *Romans et contes philosophiques* and in the successive reprints, it was classified in 1835, in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," Vol. IV. In 1844 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, éd. Furne, Vol. X. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVI.

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 100, 126.

¹⁰² "Balzac italianisant: Autour de *Sarrasine*," *Revue de littérature comparée*, XIII (1933), 457-68.

¹⁰³ See Lov., *Hist.*, p. 358.

¹⁰⁴ Balzac at that time was planning a "fourth" (in reality a third) edition of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* which appeared March, 1833, and was published by Charles Gosselin.

¹⁰⁵ Lov. Coll., A 250, fols. 1-2.

contes retranchés n'étaient ni assez philosophiques ni d'une donnée facile à découvrir, il faut ôter ce prétexte aux critiques."¹⁰⁶ His guiding thought, therefore, is that the stories here must be closely related in motives, situations, atmosphere, and theme in order to be assembled under a collective title.

The two stories withdrawn were to be replaced by new tales. Apparently those were not yet written; consequently, *Sarrasine* reappeared in the fourth edition of the collection (March, 1833), in spite of the instructions mentioned. Nevertheless, in May, 1835, the story was definitely placed in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*. The theme of the tale fits harmoniously in the *cadre* of the Scenes in which passions grow extreme. Balzac's mouthpiece, Félix Davin, asserts that without *Sarrasine* the large "vue de Paris n'eût pas été complète."¹⁰⁷

La Comédie du diable,¹⁰⁸ a fantastic tale with many satiric allusions to contemporary events and personages, appeared in all the reprints of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* but was never published in the *Etudes philosophiques*.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, Davin's following statement contains a regrettable error, even though it reveals the important role this sketch played in Balzac's projects. Davin says:

La Comédie du diable, si bouffonne en apparence, est devenue, dans cette édition, une âpre critique des gouvernements, une sorte de tohu-bohu des politiques, une sarcastique transition pour arriver à la conclusion de l'œuvre, à cette *Histoire de la succession du marquis de Carabas*, qui sera la formule allégorique de la vie collective des nations, comme *la Peau de chagrin* est la formule de la vie.¹¹⁰

Evidently the sketch was intended to serve as a prologue to a projected work which was never written. For this reason *La Comédie du diable* was classified neither in the *Etudes philosophiques* nor in the *Comédie humaine*. Davin's mention of the two story-titles may be explained, first, by the fact that Balzac announced, as late as September, 1836, *La Comédie du diable* on the cover pages of Volume XI of the *Etudes philosophiques*; sec-

¹⁰⁶ Lov. Coll., A 281, fol. 140.

¹⁰⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁸ Part I appeared anonymously in *La Mode*, November 13, 1830; a fragment of Part II was published in *La Caricature*, November 18, 1830. The two parts were assembled in the collective volumes under consideration in 1831, as well as in the two reprints of 1832 and 1833. The narrative is now in *OD.*, Vol. I.

¹⁰⁹ The tale was, nevertheless, included in all the announcements of the projected volumes of the division.

¹¹⁰ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 205.

ond, by his statement in Werdet's catalogue that the proposed "*l'Histoire de la Succession du Marquis de Carabas dans le fief de Coquatrix* [to which *La Comédie du diable* was to be the Prologue], qui doit terminer les *Etudes philosophiques*, est remise à l'année 1836."¹¹¹ Still later, in 1848, he announced *La Comédie du diable* in *L'Événement*, published by Victor Hugo. Philarète Chasles, in his Introduction to these collective volumes, calls *La Comédie du diable* a "farce terrible" in which a bored "diable" offers a banquet to the dwellers of the Inferno.

Balzac wrote *El Verdugo* in 1829. Toward the close of the year Levasseur introduced the young author to Armand Baschet,¹¹² who published the story¹¹³ under the lengthy title *Souvenirs soldatesques. El Verdugo; guerre d'Espagne* (1809). In the same periodical, May 8, 1830, *El Verdugo* was indicated as an extract from the projected collection, *Scènes de la vie militaire*.¹¹⁴ The reason for temporarily assigning it to these *Scènes* is obvious, since it is a war story; yet it never appeared in this subdivision. In this hair-raising tale Balzac shows how a "chimère sociale," a magnified conception of one's title or dynasty, results in parricide and murder. "Aie du courage, lui dit son frère Philippe: autrement notre famille est éteinte."¹¹⁵ In the Furne edition, 1845, Balzac made the following textual change: "... autrement notre *race presque royale* est éteinte."¹¹⁶ By this variation he intensifies the idea of pride in a name. Whether it was saving a title, as Chasles¹¹⁷ thinks, or a race, as Edmond Biré¹¹⁸ asserts, matters little; the significant factor is the demonstration of excess of family

¹¹¹ See Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, "Les *Etudes philosophiques* de Honoré de Balzac (Edition Werdet)," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* (July–September, 1907), XIV, 393–441.

¹¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹¹³ In *La Mode*, January 19, 1830. *El Verdugo* was published in the successive editions of the volumes now discussed. In 1835 it entered the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. V; and in 1846, the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XV. Later a separate edition of *El Verdugo* appeared in 1847 with *Le Provincial à Paris* (*Les Comédiens sans le savoir*). See *Causeries françaises* (Cercle de la librairie), No. 4 (February 16, 1923), p. 148, for the following item: "*Le Provincial à Paris*. Paris, Gabriel Roux, 2 vls. in-8° (1847)." It was announced in the *Bibliographie de la France*, June, 1848. We are indebted to Professor Hastings for the above information. Note also in Lov., *Hist.*, p. 133, an error in date which is corrected on p. 183. *El Verdugo* is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVIII.

¹¹⁴ See above, p. 35.

¹¹⁵ *Romans et contes philosophiques*, II, 78.

¹¹⁶ *Comédie humaine*, éd. Furne, XV, 412. Italics ours.

¹¹⁷ See Lov., *Hist.*, p. 172.

¹¹⁸ Biré's edition of Balzac's *Scènes de la vie militaire*, Introduction by Biré to *El Verdugo*, p. 149. In this one-volume edition Biré collected all the war stories scattered throughout the *Comédie humaine*, including *El Verdugo*.

pride which causes an old marquis to force his heir to become a criminal. An entry in Balzac's notebook proves his psychological approach and emphasizes his interest in idea rather than in action: "Dans *El Verdugo*, un fils tua son père pour une idée."¹¹⁹ This is precisely the reason for its grouping with *La Peau de chagrin*, and it explains its ultimate classification in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

Balzac began *L'Enfant maudit*¹²⁰ in 1831 and finished it in 1836. Part II of the story was preceded by a short Introduction (omitted in the subsequent editions) in which the author indicated the motivation of the action through the idea that "la maison d'Hérouville ne périrait point"¹²¹—a theme already treated in *El Verdugo*. In *L'Enfant maudit*, somewhat in the same manner as in *El Verdugo*, the egoism and the pride of the Duc d'Hérouville bring death to his wife and to his heir, Étienne, who are frail and delicate in physique but strong in faith. The old duke, possessed of family pride, forbids Etienne to marry Gabrielle, a social inferior whom he loves, and tries to force him to make a marriage of *convenance*. When Etienne resists, the duke draws his sword and so terrifies both Etienne and Gabrielle that they die of fear. Félix Davin calls *L'Enfant maudit* one of Balzac's "cinq grandes poésies," in which, he says (doubtless speaking for Honoré), Balzac "faisait courir un radieux rayon de foi, une mélodieuse métempsycose chrétienne qui commençait dans les douleurs terrestres et aboutissait au ciel."¹²² Here are seen two aspects of Balzac's philosophical idea: maternal love of the countess and the attachment between Etienne and Gabrielle. This love, together with the exaggerated idea of the family name, brings the story in line with the motif of *La Peau de chagrin*. Thus the tale appropriately belongs in the philosophical category in which it remained.

L'Elixir de longue vie,¹²³ Balzac's first publication in *La Revue de Paris*,

¹¹⁹ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 19.

¹²⁰ Part I of this story appeared in *La Revue des deux mondes*, January, 1831; it was published the same year in the collection under consideration and later in its subsequent editions. Part II, under the title *La Perle brisée*, was published in *La Chronique de Paris*, October 9, 1836. The two parts were assembled in 1837 as *L'Enfant maudit* and published by Werdet in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vols. XV-XVI. In 1846 the story entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XV, and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVIII.

¹²¹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 181.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹²³ The story first appeared in the collection under consideration and later in two reprints of 1832 and 1833. In 1835 it entered the *Etudes philosophiques*, éd. Werdet, Vol. V; in 1846 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XI, and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXX.

appeared October 24, 1830. Although in the dedication to the reader Balzac admits that "cette fantaisie est due à Hoffmann de Berlin," he treats this age-long theme about the fountain of youth in his own way and makes the story a corollary to *La Peau de chagrin* and, consequently, a logical part of the *Etudes philosophiques*. Don Juan, the hero, impelled by egoism and by greed for his inheritance, does not revive his father with the potion, as he had been instructed to do. Balzac's Don Juan is a symbol of egoism and wickedness, as well as an allegorical figure of a social evil, greed.

*Les Proscrits*¹²⁴ appeared successively under three collective titles: *Romans et contes philosophiques*, *Le Livre mystique*, and *Le Livre des douleurs*—all anticipating the *Etudes philosophiques*, in which this tale was permanently classified. In this fantastic but moving legend Balzac gives a picture of Paris and the old Sorbonne of the thirteenth century, to which Dante and his young friend Godefroid have been exiled from Florence. Both men are symbolical figures. Dante personifies medieval philosophy and science, with a strong faith in the church; he also symbolizes patriotism in exile. He greatly desires to return to Florence in order to triumph over his enemies—a worldly ambition. His friend is a mystic whose contemplation of the beyond fosters disgust with this life. Both characters personify certain human sentiments or systems. This, then, is the reason for the story's being grouped with *La Peau de chagrin* and ultimately placed in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

When *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*¹²⁵ was first published, it was accompanied by a subtitle, "Conte fantastique," which explains its affiliation with *La Peau de chagrin*; for, as Raphaël sought to capture the "Geheimnis des Lebens," so did old Frenhofer.¹²⁶ In 1837 Balzac definitely classified the story in the *Etudes philosophiques*. Nevertheless, for practical

¹²⁴ This story first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, May, 1831. After its publication in the collection now analyzed and in the two reprints of 1832 and 1833, it appeared in *Le Livre mystique* in 1835 and again in 1836. In 1840 it entered the *Etudes philosophiques*, under the general title *Le Livre des douleurs*; in 1846 it was published in the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVI; and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXXI. Although the Souverain edition was published in 1840, the text is of 1836. See Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, p. 436.

¹²⁵ This story first appeared in *L'Artiste*, July 31 and August 6, 1831. After its publication in the collection under consideration and in the two reprints of 1832 and 1833, it appeared in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XVII (1837). In 1845 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIV, and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVIII.

¹²⁶ Curtius, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

reasons, to complete the required pages of the two volumes of *Le Provincial à Paris* (*Les Comédiens sans le savoir*), in 1847 Balzac temporarily added *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* under the title *Gillette* to these scenes of Parisian life.¹²⁷

The story, a study of art and artists, is laid in the seventeenth century. Frenhofer, the painter, hides from his friend, Porbus, a masterpiece on which he has been working for some time. Finally he unveils it before Porbus and another artist, none other than Poussin. The two are astonished to see a confused mass of color without lines or attempt at composition, except a woman's foot admirably executed in the corner of the canvas. Old Frenhofer, says Merlant, has become a "victime de l'intensité avec laquelle il se figure son idéal artistique; il y a chez lui rupture d'équilibre entre la vie intérieure et le sens commun."¹²⁸ Balzac maintained the sane view that too much science or an overrefined conception of art renders the artist powerless to produce his masterpiece; the very intensity of Frenhofer's conception of his ideal defeated him. Davin states that in *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* Balzac "nous montre l'art tuant l'œuvre."¹²⁹ The painter, in his ardent desire to portray life, to get at its secret, has overdone his retouching. In 1839, in the Preface to the *Fille d'Ève*, Balzac himself throws light on the relation of this story to *La Peau de chagrin*. He says that this is one of the works which "continuent pour ainsi dire *La Peau de chagrin*, en montrant le désordre que la pensée arrivée à tout son développement produit dans l'âme de l'artiste, en expliquant par quelles lois arrive le suicide de l'art."¹³⁰ To realize the infinitely perfect and beautiful is a human impossibility. Frenhofer became an "halluciné," a monomaniac, as detached from life and as absorbed in his art as was Raphaël in himself and in his eager desires, or as was Balthazar Claës in his arduous search for the composition of the atom. The painter dies of despair because no one understands his aesthetic mysticism—a psychological and physiological phenomenon.

*Le Réquisitionnaire*¹³¹ is a dramatic episode laid in Normandy during

¹²⁷ Cf. *Causeries françaises* (Cercle de la librairie), No. 4 (February 16, 1923), p. 148. See also Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 133, 178, where there are errors in dates.

¹²⁸ Merlant, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

¹²⁹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 204.

¹³⁰ *OD.*, III, 528.

¹³¹ This story first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, February 23, 1831. It was published later in the successive editions of the collection under consideration. In 1835 it appeared in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XVII. In 1846 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIV; and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXIX.

the Reign of Terror. A mother, in agonizing suspense concerning her son's danger of death, thought that he had returned home safely. The next morning, however, she discovered that she had mistaken someone else for him. The intense shock brought on her death at the same moment that her son was shot by the Revolutionary troops. Davin summarizes the theme as "une mère tuée par la violence du sentiment maternel. Voilà donc la femme considérée ... comme mère, et devenant, ... victime de l'idée."¹³² The tragic consequence of this story is due to a philosophical conception akin to that in *La Peau de chagrin*: excess of sentiment renders the nervous system so sensitive that a shock may result in death. Edmond Biré explains the grouping of the story among the philosophical tales in these words: "Le dénouement est dû moins à un fait qu'à une idée, et cette idée est celle-ci: l'amour maternel, porté au plus haut degré, peut devenir, en vertu de son excès même, un principe de mort."¹³³ Without doubt this was Balzac's reason for permanently placing *Le Réquisitionnaire* in the category of the *Etudes philosophiques*, with which it is closely linked.

*Etude de femme*¹³⁴ is a short study of a woman's passing fancy. Although originally grouped with *La Peau de chagrin*, it is out of keeping with the deeper themes of the philosophical tales, since it treats of ordinary private life. Because of such considerations the author made early plans, in 1832, as seen from letters to his publishers, Mame and Gosselin,¹³⁵ to remove it from this collection. He did not do so, however, until 1835, when, under the new temporary title *Profil de marquise*, the sketch was placed in the first edition of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" in order to fulfil the required pages of these volumes. As the new title suggests, the interest of the story centers in the marquise. Mme de Listomère had, in Balzac's words, "une petite crise nerveuse" because she could not inspire such deep affection as did another woman, Mme de Nucingen. At first glance it would seem that the characters and events of the story harmonize with the trend of Parisian society life in which the sole occupation of women was to maintain their sovereignty in the *salons*. And yet it can be said

¹³² Lov., *Hist.*, p. 203. Italics of Davin.

¹³³ Biré's ed. of Balzac's *Scènes de la vie militaire*, Introduction, p. 1.

¹³⁴ This tale first appeared in *La Mode*, March 12, 1830. It was published in all the editions of the volumes now discussed. In 1835 it was reprinted in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; it entered in 1842 the "Scènes de la vie privée" (*Comédie humaine*, Vol. I), and is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

¹³⁵ Cited above, pp. 41-42.

that Balzac's acute sense of harmony and order ultimately induced him to place this sketch, under its original title, in the *Scènes de la vie privée*. *Etude de femme* belongs more appropriately in the *Scènes* in which are depicted "des émotions, des sensations irréfléchies."¹³⁶ Furthermore, the author himself stated in the Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*¹³⁷ that the *Scènes de la vie privée* were to represent young people whose errors are due to inexperience of life. Certainly, this is the case in the sudden intrigue between the youthful Eugène de Rastignac and the sophisticated Mme de Listomère.

Balzac's interest in the period of religious wars dated from 1821. In a letter to Laure Surville, written November 23 of that year, he inquired whether he could obtain at Bayeux or at Caen books on the history of France. He informed his sister of his plans: "Le roman que j'irai faire [chez vous] sera, ou la *Démence de Charles VI*, ou la *Faction Armagnac et Bourguignonne*, ou la *Conspiration d'Amboise*, ou la *Saint-Barthélemy*."¹³⁸ The massacre of Saint-Bartholomew is touched upon in *Les Deux Rêves*, a story destined (in 1830) for a projected collective volume, *Scènes de la vie politique*,¹³⁹ but which never appeared there. After its first publication in *La Mode*, *Les Deux Rêves* came out again under a new title, *Le Petit Souper*,¹⁴⁰ with a subtitle, "Conte fantastique," which indicates its coloring. Omitting the subtitle and restoring the original title, as more specific, Balzac grouped the narrative with the twelve philosophical tales and subsequently classified it in the *Etudes philosophiques*.¹⁴¹ In 1843 *Les Deux Rêves* became Part III of *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*¹⁴² and served as a conclusion to the political principles expressed in Parts I and II of that novel.

Under either title this is the tale of two dreams told at a late dinner to a small group of guests. The first dream, related by a queer old lawyer,

¹³⁶ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 46.

¹³⁷ OD., III, 519.

¹³⁸ LF., p. 49.

¹³⁹ See above, p. 34. This title was used later, in 1846, as a general heading for the fourth subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*. See Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 145, 189.

¹⁴⁰ *La Revue des deux mondes*, December, 1830.

¹⁴¹ Wer., Vol. XII.

¹⁴² Published by Souverain in 3 vols.; in 1846 *Les Deux Rêves*, still as Part III of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, entered the second division of the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVI. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXX. This analysis will be completed in sec. vi, below, where the entire novel will be considered. For a full history of publication, see W. L. Crain, "A Critical Edition of Balzac's *Le Secret des Ruggieri*," chap. iv of this volume.

concerns Catherine de' Medici. She defends the Saint-Bartholomew massacre on the ground that for royal power "il fallait dans l'Etat un seul Dieu, une seule foi, un seul maître."¹⁴³ The second dream is told by a surgeon, who dreamed that during an operation he became aware of both a visible and an invisible universe, forming "une seule et même matière animée, depuis les marbres jusqu'à Dieu!"¹⁴⁴ These ideas presented allegorically in dreams align the story with *La Peau de chagrin* and therefore make it an integral part of the *Etudes philosophiques*.

*Jésus-Christ en Flandre*¹⁴⁵ is also an allegory with a mystical theme. Balzac gives a description of a catastrophe as told by the mariners of Ostend. In essence it is the legend of Christ walking upon the waves. The scene is a ferryboat, at one end of which are "les gens supérieurs," and at the other the "parias de la société."¹⁴⁶ Among the poor people is a stranger who comforts his fellow-men with mystic words; and during a storm they walk in faith with him safely ashore, while the haughty and the faithless perish. Davin describes the story in the following words: "*Jésus-Christ en Flandre* est la démonstration de la puissance de la foi, considérée aussi comme *idée*."¹⁴⁷ This circumstance explains why Balzac, from the start, grouped the story with the philosophical and mystical tales and ultimately classified it in the *Etudes philosophiques*. In 1845 *Jésus-Christ en Flandre* absorbed a short tale, *L'Eglise*, and, remaining in the same category, entered the *Comédie humaine* under the original title. It should be added that the fragment, *L'Eglise*, was originally a sketch, *Zéro*, with a subtitle "Conte fantastique,"¹⁴⁸ which may account for its inclusion with *Jésus-Christ en Flandre*. Furthermore, in analyzing this fragment, Davin

¹⁴³ *Romans et contes philosophiques*, III, 338.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 348. On this idea of unity in the universe, cf. Diderot, *Le Rêve de D'Alembert* (*Œuvres complètes*, éd. Garnier), II, 138-39: "Tous les êtres circulent les uns dans les autres, par conséquent toutes les espèces ... tout est en flux perpétuel. ... Tout animal est plus ou moins plante; toute plante est plus ou moins animal. ... Il n'y a qu'un seul grand individu, c'est le tout." In this connection, on Balzac's great admiration for G. Saint-Hilaire, see Hélène d'Alsó, "Saint-Hilaire et M. de Balzac," *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation* (Bruxelles), October 15, 1934, pp. 339-54.

¹⁴⁵ This tale first appeared in the collection under consideration and in its subsequent editions. In 1836 it was classified in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XIV; in 1845 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIV, and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVII.

¹⁴⁶ Chasles; see Lov., *Hist.*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 205. Italics ours.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

says: "Le rêve fantastique intitulé *l'Eglise* est une saisissante vision des idées religieuses se dévorant elles-mêmes, et croulant tour à tour les unes sur les autres, ruinées par l'incrédulité, qui est aussi une idée."¹⁴⁹ In *L'Eglise* the author tells of his dream in a cathedral. The church is represented as an old, degraded woman who suddenly is transformed into an angel of light. The last message of Balzac is that the church must be defended, because the great and magnificent things accomplished during the past ages surpass all the evil that may have been provoked.¹⁵⁰

In direct opposition to *La Peau de chagrin*, which served as a starting-point for the collection, *Jésus-Christ en Flandre* stands as a concluding hopeful sign in Balzac's original analysis of the causes of suffering and evil. Whereas many of the preceding stories represent egoism, vice, pride, and skepticism, this legend portrays charity, humility, faith, and love.

It is interesting to note that out of these thirteen early stories, twelve are short, mostly *contes*, varying from 9 to 40 pages in length,¹⁵¹ and only one, *La Peau de chagrin*, is really a novel, containing 290 pages. The binding threads are hardly visible to the superficial eye; nevertheless, they manifest a tendency toward unity and a purpose which will become stronger and more evident as the number of Balzac's works increases.

During the autumn of 1831 Paris was eagerly reading the *Romans et contes philosophiques*, while Balzac was writing and making plans for the publication of new works, either wholly his own or written in collaboration with other authors. In this manner, he published (February, 1832), anonymously, with Philarète Chasles and Charles Rabou, the *Contes bruns*,¹⁵² a collection of gloomy stories in each of which was described some form of violent death. An anonymous critic—probably Honoré himself—explains the title in the following phrase: "... *bruns*, sans doute pour satisfaire aux lois de la couleur locale."¹⁵³ This *couleur locale* was aptly advertised on the title-page by a lithographed vignette. It served as a signature and represented a head turned upside down with hair on end, with wide-open, squinting eyes, and with thin lips drawn back showing large, strong teeth. The expression is cadaverous and terrified—therefore, in keeping with the tone of these exciting tales.

To the 398 pages which composed this volume Balzac contributed 122.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁵⁰ *Con.*, XXVII, 313-16.

¹⁵¹ In the 1831 ed.

¹⁵² Published by Urbain Canel and Adolphe Guyot.

¹⁵³ *La Caricature*, February 16, 1832. The article is reprinted in Lov., *Hist.*, p. 236.

Of these, 72 were later transposed to the *Comédie humaine*. It is necessary, therefore, to consider both this material and that which was discarded. Balzac's contribution consisted of twelve short stories under one common title, *Une Conversation entre onze heures et minuit*, and a separate story, *Le Grand d'Espagne*. Marcel Bouteron¹⁵⁴ has reprinted these tales with a Preface and notes and, for convenience, has given to ten episodes of the *Conversation* individual titles.¹⁵⁵ Balzac himself had already designated two of them as: "Histoire du chevalier de Beauvoir" and "La Maîtresse de notre colonel." The tales were told after dinner by the fireplace, around which are grouped a dozen people, men and women. Emile Henriot¹⁵⁶ states that Balzac insisted that such a gathering took place in the salon of Baron Gérard, which was frequented by Mérimée, Delacroix, and Stendhal. The last is referred to in the *Conversation* as "un homme gros et gras, homme de beaucoup d'esprit et qui devait partir pour l'Italie."¹⁵⁷ The women, guests of Baron Gérard, were Sophie and Delphine Gay and others. The opening pages of the first story, which M. Bouteron named "Un Salon parisien," serve as a framework for the twelve distinct episodes. Since each of these *réçits* is a unit in itself, the author later transposed them, at will or at need, with changes and modifications to fit¹⁵⁸ them into various parts of the *Comédie humaine*; so *Autre Etude de femme*, for example, is shown by W. L. Crain¹⁵⁹ to be a mosaic partly made up of compositions taken from the *Conversation*.

It is possible that from their inception Balzac counted on transferring these *réçits* from the *Contes bruns*. His changing plans are recorded in his correspondence. He had signed a contract with Mame on June 5, 1832,¹⁶⁰ for the publication of the *Conversation*, together with other works. He referred to the *Contes bruns* in a letter to his mother on June 10: "Comme ce que j'y ai fait sera réimprimé dans les *Causeries du soir*, tu dois peu

¹⁵⁴ H. de Balzac, *Contes bruns*, éd. M. Bouteron.

¹⁵⁵ These titles will be set within quotation marks.

¹⁵⁶ *Le Temps*, April 9, 1927.

¹⁵⁷ *Contes bruns*, éd. Bouteron, p. 71. Professor Robert Vigneron concurs in the probable presence of Stendhal at the meeting and adds that it must have taken place between September and November, 1830, the time at which Stendhal was appointed consul to Italy.

¹⁵⁸ The classifications and shifts of these stories will be discussed below.

¹⁵⁹ "The Reworking of Balzac's *Autre Etude de femme*" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1925).

¹⁶⁰ *LF.*, p. 113, n. 1.

tenir à ceux [les contes] de Chasles et de Rabou."¹⁶¹ The proposed volume of *Causeries du soir*, apparently a patchwork in the manner of *Une Conversation*, was never published.¹⁶² Yet throughout July, August, and September, 1832, he frequently discussed the appearance of this work, even assuring his mother that it would be published by Mame the following February!¹⁶³

Balzac made another direct reference to the *Conversation* in *Les Marana*¹⁶⁴ of 1832; in the volume edition of this story (1834) he indicated (contrary to fact) that the *Conversation* had been classified in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne": "Ce divertissement de bivouac ["Histoire du capitaine Bianchi"] est raconté dans les *Conversations* par lesquelles cet ouvrage [*Scènes de la vie parisienne*] est terminé, ... [*Les Marana, Scènes de la vie parisienne* (1834), II, 5-6]." This passage remained the same in the Charpentier edition (II, 241-42), notwithstanding Davin's incorrect statement, in April, 1835, that the "*Conversations* ... ouvrent les *Scènes de la Vie politique*."¹⁶⁵ One cannot trust the statements of Balzac-Davin, for discrepancies in dates and facts obscure the true situation. For example, in the Preface to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," August 30, 1835, our novelist stated that the "*Conversations* ... qui devaient terminer les *Scènes de la Vie parisienne* ... serviront d'introduction aux *Scènes de la Vie politique*."¹⁶⁶ This was not the case. And yet, in 1845, when the author shifted *Les Marana* to the "Etudes philosophiques," he perpetuated the error: "Ce divertissement de bivouac est raconté ailleurs (*Scènes de la Vie parisienne*)."¹⁶⁷ Curiously, this faulty cross-reference remained, even in the Conard edition,¹⁶⁸ despite the fact that neither the episode nor the *Conversation* was ever classified in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" or "politique." Ultimately, however, some of the *réçits* were classed in the two other subdivisions of the *Etudes de mœurs*, namely, the "Scènes de la vie privée" and the "Scènes de la vie de province."

It is interesting to follow each *réçit* in its transpositions on the way to its final place in the *Comédie humaine*. "Un salon parisien"¹⁶⁹ was used

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 76, n. 2; and p. 79, n. 1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁶⁴ *La Revue de Paris*, December, 1832, pp. 235-36.

¹⁶⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 49. These Scenes were published in 1846.

¹⁶⁶ *OD.*, III, 392.

¹⁶⁸ XXIX, 60-61.

¹⁶⁷ *Fur.*, XV, 221.

¹⁶⁹ *Contes bruns*, pp. 19-23.

for the description of Mme d'Esther's *salon* in *Le Conseil*.¹⁷⁰ Expanded, it served for the description of Mme d'Espard's *salon* in *Autre Etude de femme*.¹⁷¹ To this story were also added the two long paragraphs in praise of Napoleon;¹⁷² "La Maîtresse de notre colonel,"¹⁷³ now told by General Montriveau, while in the *Conversation* it was told by an artillery officer; and "La Femme du médecin,"¹⁷⁴ erroneously indicated by W. L. Crain as new material. "La Femme du médecin" in *Autre Etude de femme* becomes the death scene of Charlotte, Henri de Marsay's first love, which is told by Bianchon; in the *Conversation*, the dying woman was the wife of a German doctor, and the story was told by a young physician whose name was not given.

"Histoire du chevalier de Beauvoir" and *Le Grand d'Espagne*¹⁷⁵ joined *La Grande Bretèche*¹⁷⁶ under the title *La Grande Bretèche, ou Les Trois Vengeances*.¹⁷⁷ In journal publication the first two stories were permanently added to *Dinah Pièdefer*,¹⁷⁸ and in lieu of *La Grande Bretèche* a paragraph summary was temporarily substituted. Next they reappeared, in volume publication, under the common title *La Muse du département*¹⁷⁹ (1843), but their individual titles were now omitted. When, in the same year, these old companions were republished in *Les Mystères de province*,¹⁸⁰ with the title *La Muse du département, ou Dinah*, Balzac restored the first title and made the following changes: "Histoire du chevalier de Beauvoir" was told by Lousteau; the title *Le Grand d'Espagne* was changed to "Histoire d'un croc où monsieur Gravier se pose crânement," and the story was told by Gravier; and *La Grande Bretèche* was told again in full by Bianchon. Finally, however, in 1845, this last story returned to its original classification in the "Scènes de la vie privée,"¹⁸¹ as the concluding part

¹⁷⁰ *Scènes de la vie privée* (2d ed., 1832), Vol. III.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* (5th ed., 1842), Vol. II.

¹⁷² *Contes bruns*, pp. 31-33.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-97.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-70.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-46, 122-43.

¹⁷⁶ This story first appeared together with *Le Message* under the title *Le Conseil, Scènes de la vie privée* (2d ed., 1832), Vol. III. See below, p. 55.

¹⁷⁷ "Scènes de la vie de province" (1837), Vol. III; and Charpentier ed. (1839), Vol. I.

¹⁷⁸ This story first appeared in *Le Messenger*, March 20-April 29, 1843.

¹⁷⁹ *Les Parisiens en province*: II, *La Muse du département* ("Scènes de la vie de province," *Comédie humaine*, Vol. VI).

¹⁸⁰ Published by Souverain in 4 vols., 1843-44.

¹⁸¹ *Fur.*, Vol. IV.

of *Autre Etude de femme*. We see, therefore, that five borrowings from the *Conversation*, in addition to *Le Grand d'Espagne*, were used in the *Comédie humaine*. "Histoire du chevalier de Beauvoir" and *Le Grand d'Espagne* appeared five times each after they had left the *Contes bruns*; "La Maîtresse de notre colonel," "La Femme du médecin," and the paragraphs concerning Napoleon each appeared once; while the setting of the *salon* scenes, undergoing various changes, was used three times.

The remaining stories of the *Conversation* never entered the *Comédie humaine*. Part of the general *salon* setting; the "Histoire du capitaine Bianchi" with the enthusiastic praise of Napoleon, now reduced to a four-line paragraph; a discussion of contemporary civilization; "L'Avortement"; Stendhal's story of "Ecce homo"; "Le Tic du mort"; "Le Père du réfractaire"; "Le Gilet rouge"; "Le Président Vigneron"; "Le Bol de punch"; and "Le Général Ruska"—all these under a new common title, *Echantillons de causeries françaises*—were published *in toto* with the first edition of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*.¹⁸² Next, the *Echantillons*, with an additional paragraph from the introductory pages of the *Conversation*, was placed permanently in the *Œuvres diverses*, Volume I.¹⁸³

The question now arises as to why Balzac utilized to such an extent his *Contes bruns*. The answer is, perhaps, seen in the dates of their peregrinations. Those begin in 1837 and go on steadily until 1845—a period during which the author was in full possession of his scheme. He was then enlarging his earlier subdivisions and adding new ones. In spite of certain adverse criticisms,¹⁸⁴ from the personal friends of Chasles and Rabou, Balzac fully realized the mechanical and artistic possibilities of these easily adaptable and movable *réécits*. It is interesting to note that seven tales of the *Contes bruns* dealt with illicit love and its consequences, an aspect of life already touched upon in several stories of the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*.

It will be recalled that the *Scènes de la vie privée* was Balzac's first collective title, used in 1830 for two volumes composed of six short tales, dealing with domestic life and morals. From the fact that our author used this collective title again for an enlarged grouping, and because there is a solidarity in the general trend of these stories, it is safe to assume that

¹⁸² Published by De Potter in 3 vols., 1844.

¹⁸³ *OC.*, éd. Lévy, XX, 299-329.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Anonymous, "Balzac et la tête à l'envers," *Chronique des lettres françaises*, XXVIII (1927), 518-19.

he now had a definite aim in view. These titles, moreover, throw light on his mode of thinking; he worked with related, and not with isolated, thoughts. Each of his *tableaux* or *scènes* (by which he meant tales) comprises an idea embodied in characters and in situations. Thus, a collective title represents a grouping of related thoughts under a general heading—a fact which becomes of prime importance in the author's scheme. The original and distinctive feature of the first period, let us repeat, is his persistence in using these collective titles.

On August 28, 1831, the novelist signed a contract with the publisher Mame for the reprinting of the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée* and for the publication of two additional volumes. The four volumes of the second edition¹⁸⁵ of the *Scènes* were on sale May 22, 1832. The contents of Volumes I and II corresponded to the same volumes of the first edition, both in titles and in text, although the pagination varied slightly. Volumes III and IV comprised nine new stories. In these fifteen stories Balzac deals with simple themes of bourgeois home life and morals. It is, indeed, a limited sphere of individual and family life, not as yet broadening to the sociohistorical preoccupations of his later years.

Le Conseil was a temporary caption for two distinct tales, *Le Message*¹⁸⁶ and *La Grande Bretèche*,¹⁸⁷ their individual titles were, however, omitted in the volumes now discussed. Both are stories told in the *salon* with similar themes of domesticity. The purpose of the *récits* was to warn—hence *Le Conseil*—the young hostess, Mme d'Esther, of the dangers of an illicit love affair with M. de La Plaine. As has been indicated above, Balzac had borrowed the description of her *salon* from the setting in the *Conversation*. The opening episode of *Le Conseil* is related by one of the guests, M. de Villaines, who had witnessed a fatal coach accident. His traveling companion, a dying man, intrusted to him the letters of his mistress. Burdened with the news of a lover's death, a lock of his hair, and the letters, M. de Villaines proceeded to find Juliette de Montpersan, a young married woman. The depth of her silent grief is briefly and simply presented. But the guests do not consider *Le Message* tragic enough, and the story-teller then offers a second *récit* , another warning to his hostess. *La Grande Bretèche* is a tale of jealousy and terrible vengeance. One night

¹⁸⁵ Published by Mame and Delaunay-Vallée. Announced in the *Bibliographie de la France*, May 26, 1832.

¹⁸⁶ First published in *La Revue des deux mondes*, February, 1832.

¹⁸⁷ This appeared first in the collection under consideration.

M. de Merret suspected that his wife was hiding her lover in a closet built in the wall of her room. She swore innocence upon her crucifix, but the husband's rage and suspicion wiped out all human feeling in him. In the dead of night he had a mason wall up the closet door. Then he remained in his wife's room for a fortnight, watching her agony while her lover died a lingering death.

Balzac's motive in placing *Le Conseil* in the *Scènes de la vie privée* is, we think, revealed in the concluding statement of the double story: "Il n'y a pas de bonheur assez grand pour faire affronter les secrètes tortures que les passions nous font subir."¹⁸⁸ Thus the author, by the principle of contrast, argues indirectly for quiet domestic happiness; this is his usual concern in the *Scènes de la vie privée*. Furthermore, in both episodes he depicts tragedy in private home life. This theme is in keeping with the general trend of these Scenes, to which the stories ultimately returned—the first tale with its restored individual title, *Le Message*,¹⁸⁹ in 1842, and the second in 1845.¹⁹⁰ Before reaching their final lodgment, however, the two stories underwent shiftings which throw more light on Balzac's growing scheme. While planning a third edition of these Scenes, he wrote to Mame on September 30, 1832, the following instructions:

Je supprimerai *Le Conseil* [*Le Message* and *La Grande Bretèche*], puis *le Devoir d'une femme* dans le troisième volume, pour les remplacer par une nouvelle scène qui paraîtra dans la *Revue de Paris* et qui sera plus dans la nature et le genre des *Scènes de la vie privée* que les deux supprimés que je trouve un peu en dehors de la moralité du livre.¹⁹¹

The last part of this statement certainly applies to the second story, which, as will be shown presently, Balzac transposed finally to the *Etudes philosophiques*. The first story (*Le Message*, first episode of *Le Conseil*) he placed temporarily in the new subdivision, "Scènes de la vie de province."¹⁹² In regard to this on November 1, 1833, he wrote to Mme Hanska: "... il faut, je crois, que je trouve quelque chose pour compléter mon second volume des *Scènes de la vie de province* ... il faudra une scène de

¹⁸⁸ *Scènes de la vie privée*, III (1832), 101.

¹⁸⁹ *Fur.*, Vol. II. The story is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

¹⁹⁰ See above, p. 53, and n. 181.

¹⁹¹ Lov. Coll., A 250, fols. 1-2. *Le Devoir d'une femme* under the title *Adieu* entered in 1835 the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. IV. The "nouvelle scène" is *La Grenadière*, which appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, October, 1832.

¹⁹² Vol. II. The volumes were on sale December, 1833, and the publisher was Mme Charles Béchét, not Mame, as the above-mentioned letter seems to imply.

quarante ou cinquante pages."¹⁹³ When a certain number of pages was needed for the completion of a volume, stories from the *Scènes de la vie privée* nearly always filled the gap. This temporary shift, then, of *Le Message* (later of *La Grande Bretèche*, as part of *Les Trois Vengeances*), notwithstanding the author's communication of September 30, 1832, was impelled by a practical reason with which he had continually to reckon as his scheme developed.

We may anticipate by saying that, besides *Le Message*, two other stories, *La Femme abandonnée* and *La Grenadière*, were used to meet the same need. These three, said Davin, Balzac's mouthpiece, formed "une trilogie des souffrances de la femme supérieure. ... Ces trois individualités ... font un type."¹⁹⁴ Therefore these tales were grouped (1835) together; and later, in 1842, when new stories, more in harmony with the principle of the "Scènes de la vie de province," were written, the trilogy was finally shifted to the "Scènes de la vie privée," where it properly belongs. *Le Message* was ultimately restored to the "Scènes de la vie privée," probably because, in the last analysis, Juliette de Montpersan was not too seriously compromised and was wise enough to return to conjugal life. The misfortune which followed clandestine love taught her, as it had taught some other women portrayed in this subdivision, the "douceurs d'un heureux ménage."¹⁹⁵

La Grande Bretèche, separated after 1832 from its temporary mate, *Le Message*, suffered three shiftings before it was permanently restored in 1845 to its original subdivision, "Scènes de la vie privée." In 1837 it was coupled with two vengeance tales under the general title *La Grande Bretèche, ou Les Trois Vengeances*¹⁹⁶ and, like *Le Message*, was placed temporarily in the new subdivision, "Scènes de la vie de province." Here the three stories are told in a provincial *salon* by three guests to prove the innocence of their hostess, Mme de la Boudraye, and her supposed lover. M. Bouteron explains the combination of these three tales in this statement: "Il [Balzac] a besoin de copie pour corser la première nouvelle du volume: *La Grande Bretèche, ou Les Trois Vengeances*."¹⁹⁷ In addition to similarity of themes, the fact that the action is laid in the provinces may justify their temporary grouping. To harmonize these stories with the

¹⁹³ *LEt.*, I, 71.

¹⁹⁴ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 60.

¹⁹⁵ Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*, *OD.*, III, 519.

¹⁹⁶ An analysis of these stories is given below, pp. 100-101.

¹⁹⁷ *Contes bruns*, p. 10.

new subdivision, Balzac inserted an introductory paragraph depicting the dangers of illicit love in the provinces. It may be argued that the walling-up alive of a rival and the cutting-off of a wife's arm (which occurs in *Le Grand d'Espagne*) harmonize with the "sombres et douloureuses passions" of the "Scènes de la vie de province";¹⁹⁸ and, judging from a letter to Mme Hanska on February 10-12, 1837, one is led to believe that Balzac was satisfied with the transfer. He says that "*La Grande Bretèche* [est] rarrangée [*sic*], c'est-à-dire *encadrée mieux* qu'elle ne l'était primitivement et escortée de deux autres aventures."¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, this classification was short-lived, for, as has been shown previously, in 1845, separated from these two stories and given a new framework, the tale becomes the "fin de *Autre Etude de femme*" and is permanently re-established in its more logical subdivision, the "Scènes de la vie privée."²⁰⁰ Whether laid in the provinces or in the capital, it is essentially a tragedy of private life. Whereas these frequent shifts of stories (between 1833 and 1837) may be symptomatic of some uncertainty about the "plan" in Balzac's mind, they are definitely accounted for, in some cases, by precedence given to practical issues—the demands of the publishing firm.

We return to the second edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*. *La Bourse*, a charming tale, is in harmony with the collective title under which it first appeared. The story represents Balzac's earlier conception of the narrow, but exquisite, setting of domesticity; in fact, the portrayal of the humble, and yet dignified, home of Mme de Rouville and her daughter, Adélaïde, has all the delicacy of an easel piece. Balzac must have thought of such a quiet home when he asserted in the Preface to the first edition of these *Scènes* that he painted therein "le tableau vrai de mœurs que les familles ensevelissent aujourd'hui dans l'ombre, et que l'observateur a quelquefois de la peine à deviner."²⁰¹ Hippolyte Schinner, the painter, is baffled by the mystery which surrounds the lives of these two women, although attracted by the sweetness of the young girl. He becomes a friend of the family and is commissioned to paint the father's portrait. One evening during a card game he misses his old, silk-embroidered purse. Unable to explain its disappearance, he withdraws. Later, however, he accepts an invitation from Mme de Rouville. After a while he notices before him a new purse, artistically embroidered. He then understands the gift as an

¹⁹⁸ "Scènes de la vie de province," préface de la première édition, *OD.*, III, 384.

¹⁹⁹ *LEt.*, I, 380. Italics ours.

²⁰⁰ See above, p. 53.

²⁰¹ *OD.*, III, 379.

expression of gratitude for his work. Balzac skilfully depicts the awakening of love between the two young people and its fulfilment in a happy marriage—a contrast to the ending of many tales in these volumes. The events which take place in the life of Hippolyte and Adélaïde are in tune with the “Scènes de la vie privée,” which, Davin says, reflect human life “dans son réveil matinal, et croissant pour fleurir.”²⁰² *La Bourse* is closely integrated with this grouping and was classed therein permanently in 1842.²⁰³ This classification came, however, only after a temporary placement in the first edition of the “Scènes de la vie parisienne,”²⁰⁴ for which the author had not yet composed a sufficient number of stories. It is significant that he also placed temporarily in the “Scènes de la vie parisienne” two other tales of private life, *Une Double Famille* and *Gobseck*. Between these two stories, *La Bourse* “fait un contraste prodigieux,” says Davin in his Introduction to the *Etudes de mœurs*. We surmise that again Davin is speaking for Balzac. Thus the emergency which necessitated the combining of stories for the completion of a volume apparently did not wholly destroy the novelist’s feeling for artistic effects.

Le Devoir d’une femme had first been published as *Souvenirs soldatesques; Adieu*,²⁰⁵ a title indicating its military coloring. It will be recalled that, at the time this tale appeared (1830, in journal publication), Balzac had announced two projected collective volumes, *Scènes de la vie politique* and *Scènes de la vie militaire*.²⁰⁶ One will readily concur with Merlant²⁰⁷ in his surprise that *Adieu* was not placed in “Scènes de la vie militaire.” Possibly if Balzac had completed these Scenes, this story, with its famous description of the crossing of the Beresina, would have found its place in that subdivision. Since the story was classified in the *Scènes de la vie privée* under a new title, one may assume that the author deliberately emphasized not its military aspect but the character study of young Stéphanie, who, through duty, followed her husband on his long expedition—hence *Le Devoir d’une femme*. Here he anticipated the theme of the projected volumes, the *Etudes de femmes*. As this project was not realized, all these stories, special studies of women, were classified either temporarily or permanently in the “Scènes de la vie privée.” Yet Balzac definitely

²⁰² Lov., *Hist.*, p. 197.

²⁰³ *Fur.*, Vol. I. The story is now in *Con.*, Vol. I.

²⁰⁴ 1835, in Vol. I; 2d ed., 1839, in Vol. I.

²⁰⁶ See above, pp. 34-35.

²⁰⁵ In *La Mode*, May 15-June 15, 1830.

²⁰⁷ Merlant, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

stated²⁰⁸ that *Le Devoir d'une femme* did not belong to these scenes because it is "en dehors de la moralité du livre." Davin, in an exceedingly illuminating passage, explains the temporary misplacement of *Adieu*. He approaches the problem of classification from the publisher's point of view, and his statement holds in regard to the other temporary classifications so far mentioned, as well as to those that will come hereafter. He argues:

La mode, au-devant de laquelle courent les libraires, exigeait des livres à toute force; peu leur importait le sens des œuvres qu'ils publiaient. Ainsi, tel fragment n'avait rien de philosophique et convenait aux *Scènes de la Vie privée*, tandis que telle scène était une *Etude philosophique*: la fatalité du commerce, le besoin du moment les transposait. La première livraison des *Etudes philosophiques* en offre un exemple. *Adieu*, publié dans le troisième volume des *Scènes de la Vie privée*, et dont personne n'a compris la destination dans l'œuvre générale, est certes une des plus justes et des plus fermes déductions du thème inscrit sur *La Peau de chagrin*.²⁰⁹

Because the basic idea of *Adieu* is so closely related to that of *La Peau de chagrin*, Balzac in 1835 permanently classed the former story in the *Etudes philosophiques*. It is noteworthy that the author opened the story with an epigraph from *César Birotteau*²¹⁰ which clarifies his scientific idea: "Les plus hardis physiologistes sont effrayés par les résultats physiques de ce phénomène moral, qui n'est cependant qu'un foudroiement opéré à l'intérieur, et, comme tous les effets électriques, bizarre et capricieux dans ses modes."²¹¹

The fundamental idea of *Adieu* is similar to that of *Le Réquisitionnaire* and of *L'Enfant maudit*. The intensity of moral suffering or of great joy produces so strong a shock in the nervous system that death is the result. The young Comtesse de Vandières, wife of an old general who died in her presence at the crossing of the Beresina, loses her mind during that terrible retreat of the French army. A few years later in France, her lover, Colonel Philippe de Sucey, attempts to restore her mind by reproducing a close duplicate of the physical situation in which she became demented. This semiscientific device has been known, at times, to bring the desired results, and the method has an important place in the treatment of certain psychoses. The countess recognized her lover gradually, but the happi-

²⁰⁸ See above, p. 56.

²⁰⁹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 195.

²¹⁰ This novel was, at that time, designed for the *Etudes philosophiques*.

²¹¹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 183.

ness was too great for her weakened mind and body, and she fell dead with a last "adieu." The distracted Philippe shot himself.

*Les Célibataires*²¹² was the first study in which Balzac dealt with the attitude toward life and the habits of celibates. The original title of *Le Curé de Tours* was *La Vieille Fille*,²¹³ as is learned from the manuscript preserved at Chantilly. Apparently, Balzac first intended to show the two kinds of good and bad old maid, Mlle Salomon²¹⁴ and Mlle Gamard. The title, *La Vieille Fille*,²¹⁵ however, proved temporary, as Balzac realized that Birotteau had usurped the role of the principal character. The next title proposed was *Le Prêtre catholique*,²¹⁶ the present, *Le Curé de Tours*, appeared for the first time in 1843. These tentative captions are indicative of social classes; therefore, it is clear that by the early part of 1832 Balzac's interest in the limited sphere of individual and family life had broadened into a sociological preoccupation dealing with larger groups. The priest and, in fact, the whole ecclesiastical world were personified in the ambitious and powerful Troubert, who unfolded his wings outside of his domain.

The theme seems somewhat out of tune with the group of stories treating of love, marriage, and domestic problems; and Balzac may have placed it in the *Scènes de la vie privée* merely to produce, through contrast, an artistic effect. More probably he may have needed it to complete the volume. In 1833 he reclassified the story, putting it in the new subdivision, "Scènes de la vie de province," of which it is still a component part. Concurrently with this shift, *Le Curé de Tours* underwent a few changes,²¹⁷ in successive editions between 1833 and 1843, in order to harmonize it with the sociological trend of the *Scènes* to which the tale was permanently

²¹² This story first appeared in the collection under consideration. In 1833 it was published in the "Scènes de la vie de province," Vol. II; in 1843 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. VI; and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. IX. In regard to the title of this tale, Lovenjoul states: "Ce récit, ... dut un moment s'appeler *L'Abbé Troubert*" (*Lov., Hist.*, p. 81).

²¹³ *Lov. Coll.*, A 196, fols. 2-7.

²¹⁴ A reappearing character before 1833. Balzac gives a brief résumé of her antecedents and thus connects this story with *Louis Lambert* and *Un Drame au bord de la mer*.

²¹⁵ The title *La Vieille Fille* was used later for an entirely new story.

²¹⁶ *Lov. Coll.*, A 196, fols. 27 and 16-23. It should be noted that the hero of this manuscript version (unpublished) was the Abbé de Vèze, and not Birotteau.

²¹⁷ Dr. Rachel Wilson's detailed study of the variations in the successive editions of *Le Curé de Tours* is now completed and published in this volume. A generalization concerning this aspect of the story will suffice here.

assigned. Balzac accentuated the narrow and set opinions of the old women; he placed greater stress on the contrast between the two priests; and he emphasized both the formidable character of Troubert and the *niaiserie* of the lamblike Birotteau. The latter is singled out, in the 1843 edition (*Con.*, IX, 169), as the "principal personnage de cette histoire." It could be argued that the author shifted the emphasis from the private life of priests to a more general field, the ecclesiastical group. This change was, after all, in keeping with the wider range of Balzac's developing plans for his works. In 1843 he permanently placed this story, together with his other studies of celibacy,²¹⁸ under a group title, *Les Célibataires*, already dealt with (in part), in the "Scènes de la vie de province." This final combination proves once more that the author had a systematic mind and a natural tendency to organize.

The childlike vicar, François Birotteau, the "sublime victime" of the scheming Troubert, owes all his misfortunes to a small vice—a taste for good living, which becomes so despotic as to ruin his whole life. Such is, in brief, the theme of the story; logically it belongs to the "Scènes de la vie de province," in which, says Davin, Balzac portrays

les tracasseries mesquines dont la périodicité concentre un intérêt poignant sur le moindre détail d'existence. Il [Balzac] nous initie au secret de ces petites rivalités, de ces jalousies de voisinage, de ces tracasseries de ménage dont la force, s'accroissant chaque jour, dégrade en peu de temps les hommes ...²¹⁹

This is precisely the atmosphere in *Le Curé de Tours*, with its four characters whose celibacy the author condemns on the principle that the "état du célibataire est un état contraire à la société ... il y a des cas où les intérêts sociaux doivent l'emporter sur les intérêts particuliers."²²⁰ This is, distinctly, one aspect of Balzac's sociological approach; another is the social role given to the church as an institution of both good and bad practices.

Volume IV, the last of the *Scènes de la vie privée* (1832), was composed of five fragments: *Le Rendez-vous*, *La Femme de trente ans*, *Le Doigt de Dieu*, *Les Deux Rencontres*, and *L'Expiation*. The volume opens with a "Note de l'Editeur," from Balzac's own pen. He asserts that the unity of these fragments rests in the life of one character, disguised under different names but caught at its beginning and followed to its end. Therefore,

²¹⁸ *Pierrette* and *Un Ménage de garçon en province* (later *La Rabouilleuse*).

²¹⁹ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 47.

²²⁰ *Pierrette*, préface de la première édition (1840), *OD.*, III, 539-40.

the projected common title, *L'Esquisse de la vie d'une femme*, seems suited to these compositions.²²¹ It was, however, never used.

In the second edition of the story²²² Balzac enlarged *Le Doigt de Dieu* by a new chapter, "La Vallée du torrent," and added a sixth episode, *Souffrances inconnues*; to these six *disjecta membra* the author now gave one caption, *Même Histoire*. The first mention of this collective title appears in his journal: "Un livre intitulé *Même Histoire*, composé de fragmens détachés sans queue ni tête en apparence, mais ayant un sens logique et secret."²²³ He also wrote a preface (March, 1834), with the primary intention of pointing out the unifying thread in these fragments. The master said: "Le personnage qui traverse pour ainsi dire les six tableaux dont se compose *Même Histoire* n'est pas une figure; c'est une pensée."²²⁴ Since this *pensée* lacked continuity, the additional episode, *Souffrances inconnues*, was intended to fill the "trop forte lacune dans cette esquisse entre le *Rendez-vous* et la *Femme de trente ans*."²²⁵ The new chapter, "La Vallée du torrent," made the action of *Les Deux Rencontres* a logical outcome of the situation in which Hélène (the daughter of the woman of thirty) lived, as it motivated her elopement with the outlaw.²²⁶ This otherwise irrational action is further clarified by the author in a "complément inédit," a later addition to the Preface of 1834. Explaining the girl's marriage, he said: "Chargée d'un fratricide, elle succombe sous les remords; elle ne se croit digne de personne; elle se voit en pensée la camarade des forçats. Son mariage avec un criminel est pour elle un ordre du ciel, une fatalité."²²⁷ Besides these artistic and psychological justifications provided for the additions in *Même Histoire*, Balzac offered a more practical reason. In a letter of April, 1834, he wrote to Mme Charles Béchét: "Il faut, pour faire un volume de vingt-quatre feuilles avec l'ancien quatrième volume des *Scènes de la vie privée* [2d ed., 1832], ajouter quatre feuilles."²²⁸ In this manner the new material met the need of the publishing firm. Moreover, the author did not fail to complain of the technical

²²¹ *OD.*, III, 382.

²²² "Scènes de la vie privée" (3d ed., 1834), Vol. IV.

²²³ *Lov. Coll.*, A 181, fol. 16.

²²⁴ *OD.*, III, 383. Italics ours.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ A theme that Balzac had already treated in *Argow le pirate* (1824).

²²⁷ *Lov., Hist.*, pp. 415-16. So far as we know, critics have overlooked this additional information from Balzac's own pen.

²²⁸ *Corr.*, p. 194.

difficulties in grafting the new episode and chapter to the old material. Nonetheless, these changes must have been motivated chiefly by his desire to achieve a certain artistic effect, for, in January, 1836, he wrote to Mme Hanska: "Nous réimprimons²²⁹ en ce moment le quatrième volume des *Scènes de la Vie privée*, où j'ai fait de grands changements par rapport au sens général de *Même histoire*. Ainsi, la fuite d'Hélène avec le meurtrier est rendue presque vraisemblable; il a fallu longtemps pour trouver ces derniers nœuds."²³⁰ In the Furne edition (1842) the story appeared as *La Femme de trente ans*, with six titled chapters, through all of which, for the first time, the characters bore the same names. But Balzac's logical mind was not yet satisfied with this second partial co-ordination. He was still tormented, while re-working the Furne edition,²³¹ by the lack of homogeneity and artistry in this novel. He shared these scruples with Mme Hanska in a letter of March 2, 1843. His intention had been, he said, to replace certain parts of the novel by something more suitable; but, he added: "... il fallait paraître, et je n'ai pas eu le temps de refaire ce mélodrame indigne de moi. Mon cœur d'honnête homme de lettres en saigne encore."²³² Thus, despite his several attempts, the novel remains an unfinished piece of work, with discrepancies in dates and flagrant offenses against psychology and artistic unity. The chief objection of most critics is based on the novelist's attempt to unify six distinct tales merely by ticketing different characters with the same names and endowing them with certain common characteristics. These defects have proved a reason for faultfinding by most of the critics since 1834.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of producing a unity of effect, Balzac had no hesitation about the classification of this novel. From the start it was essentially a portrait of the "jeune fille" and, later, of the "femme de trente ans"; therefore he rightfully placed it in the *Scènes de la vie privée*. Le Breton gave a somewhat terse characterization of the story, and unwittingly justified its classification, when he said: "... une forte étude de l'âme féminine, du mariage et de l'adultère."²³³ The purpose of the novel (or mosaic) is given in the Preface of 1834. It is to "communi-

²²⁹ This reprint of Vol. IV was issued by Werdet in 1837; it is not mentioned in Lov., *Hist.* See Canfield, art. cit., in *RHL*, XLI, 200. See also *MLN*, XLVIII (1933), 497.

²³⁰ *LEt.*, I, 295.

²³¹ This volume with corrections made in Balzac's own hand may be consulted in the University of Chicago Libraries.

²³² *LEt.*, III, 118-19.

²³³ Le Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

quer à l'âme le vague d'une rêverie où les femmes puissent réveiller quelques-unes des vives impressions qu'elles ont conservées, de ranimer les souvenirs épars dans la vie, pour en faire *surgir quelques enseignements*."²³⁴

La Femme de trente ans, as it stands today, is the story of Julie de Chatillonest, who marries the dashing Victor d'Aiglemont against her father's advice. The sensitive and imaginative Julie soon discovers the true character of her husband and silently suffers from abandonment and the miseries of incompatibility. She meets a congenial friend in Lord Grenville but has learned to obey the social code; even at the cost of stifling her hungry heart, she remains the mother of her small Hélène. When Lord Grenville solves his problem by suicide, she retires to the country in grief, with no compensating love for her child. Mme d'Aiglemont later meets Charles de Vandenesse and loves again. The master-stroke of the author in subjecting the heroine once more to the supreme test of honor drew forth the following comment from Le Breton, usually a severe critic: "Rien de plus vrai, rien de plus fort que les pages de *la Femme de trente ans* où il [Balzac] met Mme d'Aiglemont en présence de Charles de Vandenesse ... de nouveau son [her] cœur va s'ouvrir, et c'est ce chaste, ce pur amour d'autrefois qui aura préparé sa chute."²³⁵ The eight-year-old Hélène becomes her mother's silent judge. One wonders if Balzac had not had occasion to observe the secret judgment of daughters upon their mothers in the homes of Mme de Berny and of Mme d'Abrantès. No psychiatrist of today could better analyze this child's actions than did Balzac in the added chapter, "La Vallée du torrent"; thus he prepares for the grotesque scene in the "Deux Rencontres." Mme d'Aiglemont's last ghastly punishment comes through her only remaining and favorite daughter Moïna, who, ignorant of their relationship, falls in love with *her* half-brother, the son of Charles de Vandenesse.

In this psychological study of a woman's early struggle, for virtue's sake, with her emotions, her aspirations toward an ideal love, and her later transformation into a cruel mother, Balzac has penetrated into the innermost soul of a woman. In spite of the piecemeal plot the heroine is true to her nature and to her milieu. Her mode of living is the logical product of her romantic imagination and of her ignorance of marriage, just as variations in men are produced by occupations, and varieties in

²³⁴ *OD.*, III, 383. Italics ours. Cf. Preface to the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, *ibid.*, pp. 379-80.

²³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

animals by climate. Furthermore, Saint-Beuve asserts—and others have repeated the assertion—that Balzac is the inventor of the woman of thirty: "C'est là une de ses découvertes les plus réelles dans l'ordre du roman intime. La clef de son immense succès était tout entière dans ce premier petit chef-d'œuvre [*Même Histoire*]." ²³⁶ Even though he did not bring it to the artistic perfection which he sought, Balzac nevertheless achieved psychological consistency in the character of Mme d'Aiglemont. The author thought highly of this novel, and, in a letter to Mme Hanska, August 26, 1834, he said: "Mais c'est à faire frémir; tout cela est vrai. Jamais je n'ai été tant remué par une œuvre. C'est plus que *la Grenadière*, plus que *La Femme abandonnée*." ²³⁷

This novel, with its careful analysis of domestic misery and its profound understanding of the motives of a woman's heart, naturally belongs to the *Scènes de la vie privée*.

Balzac had already, in the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, showed himself discerning in feminine psychology. ²³⁸ The study of women was one of his great preoccupations; hence they play an important role in the *Comédie humaine*. Our author owes his profound understanding of women to his intimate association with three devoted friends of this period, Mme de Berny, Mme Carraud, and Mme d'Abrantès. Doubtless the fickle Mme de Castries also contributed her share. ²³⁹ All these influenced his conception and portrayal of female character. Mme de Berny re-read and corrected his *Scènes de la vie privée*; Mme Carraud proved to be a most penetrating critic and a loyal friend, as is shown in her letters to the author; Mme d'Abrantès, during a long period of friendship (1825-38), revealed to him her innermost soul and that of her sex. Of Mme d'Abrantès, J. Turquan says: "Son influence dut donc être très grande et contribuer dans une large mesure à former la personnalité du jeune et déjà grand écrivain, surtout en l'éclairant sur les âmes des femmes, qu'elle ne lui peignait pas en beau." ²⁴⁰ It was she who helped Balzac to discover the woman of thirty. She was the prototype of the mature Mme d'Aigle-

²³⁶ *Causeries du lundi*, II, 446. Sainte-Beuve prefers this novel in its early editions. Cf. Le Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 135; Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Bellessort, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

²³⁷ *LEt.*, I, 188. *La Grenadière* and *La Femme abandonnée*, also studies of conjugal unhappiness, were ultimately placed in the "Scènes de la vie privée."

²³⁸ Bellessort concurs; *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²³⁹ For a full treatment of the influence of women on Balzac, see Juanita H. Floyd, *Women in the Life of Balzac*.

²⁴⁰ *La Générale Junot, duchesse d'Abrantès*, p. 371.

mont; and her daughter, Joséphine, was the model for Mme d'Aiglemont as "jeune fille." In 1831 Balzac wrote to Mme d'Abrantès asking that "Sœur Joséphine ne m'oublie pas en ses prières, moi qui me souviens d'elle en mes bouquins."²⁴¹

Balzac regarded some of these "bouquins" as character studies of women, to be used in a projected collective work, *Etudes de femmes*, to which he constantly referred in his notebook and in his letters. He hints in his *Avant-propos* at the difficulty of portraying women:

Quand Buffon peignit le lion, il achevait la lionne en quelques phrases; tandis que dans la Société la femme ne se trouve pas toujours être la femelle du mâle. Il peut y avoir deux êtres parfaitement dissemblables dans un mariage. ... L'Etat Social a des hasards que ne se permet pas la Nature, car il est la Nature plus la Société.²⁴²

The conception of the projected *Etudes de femmes* dates from the early spring of 1830. On April 16 of that year Balzac published in *La Mode* an article called "Visites: Un Pensionnat de jeunes demoiselles."²⁴³ This is a sketch of a visit to a school where the author observed children at work and at play. The article was accompanied by a "Note" explaining the intentions of the author. "L'auteur se propose d'envisager, dans une série d'articles, la situation des femmes aux époques les plus intéressantes de leur vie. Il a dû commencer par l'enfance."²⁴⁴

The proposed *Etudes de femmes* was to consist of character studies, some of which were already written and published, either in the *Scènes de la vie privée*, in the *Romans et contes philosophiques*, or in the *Contes bruns*. There were to be others, not yet written, but already indicated by title. Balzac's plan for this work was so definite that he even asked Mme Émile de Girardin to write a preface for the volume. On July 29, 1832, he wrote to her, saying: "J'ai achevé un livre intitulé *Etudes de femmes*; il me faut une préface écrite par une femme. Voulez-vous me la faire?"²⁴⁵ Balzac's term "achevé" is but an illusion—a perpetual illusion which makes him announce works as ready to appear which have not even been be-

²⁴¹ He spoke of her as "sœur" because she was for a while "sœur de charité" at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul; *ibid.*, p. 361.

²⁴² *Con.*, I, xxvii.

²⁴³ Reprinted in *OD.*, II, 187. See also the "Catalogue des ouvrages" (*Con.*, I, xvi). It never entered the *Comédie humaine*.

²⁴⁴ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴⁵ See Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, *La Genèse d'un roman*, p. 113.

gun.²⁴⁶ Still under the same self-delusion, he writes his mother on August 21, 1832: "J'ai fondu les *Etudes de femmes*, les *Conversations*, etc., dans une collection de trois ou quatre volumes originale [sic]."²⁴⁷ He gives further details about the project to his publisher Mame in a letter from Aix, September 30, 1832:

Vous aurez, vous, 3 volumes in-octavo prochainement: deux intitulés *Etudes de femmes* ... les *Etudes de femmes* se complèteraient de: *Etude de femme*, de *Sarrasine*, les deux histoires du *Conseil: Le Message* et la *Grande Bretèche*, de *Devoir d'une femme*, de la *Transaction*, bien refaite et corrigée, et bien d'autres choses. ... *La Femme abandonnée*, et d'autres que je garderai pour mettre de l'inédit ... [et] *Mme Firmiani*.²⁴⁸

One alignment of stories for this projected volume noted in Balzac's notebook includes, besides the above-mentioned titles, *Les Amours d'une laide* and *Une Fille d'Ève*.²⁴⁹ A subsequent and enlarged grouping has these additional items: "Dernières *Etudes de femmes*, 8 vols. in-8°: *La Marana*, *La Succession*, *Les Orphelins (La Grenadière)*, *Onda-Mulier*, *Saint-Jean*, *La Femme de trente ans*."²⁵⁰ Further proof that *Etudes de femmes* was to be a collective title is found in an announcement, made early in 1833, of the ten volumes of the *Etudes de mœurs* divided into series. Among these are three volumes of *Etudes de femmes*.²⁵¹ This project was never realized; Balzac abandoned it after 1833, and the stories intended for the volumes were absorbed in the first three subdivisions of the *Etudes de mœurs*, with the exception of *Adieu*, which was placed in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

It would seem, then, that Balzac's announcement of a new plan made in the spring of 1833, at the home of Mme Surville, did away entirely with this project of a collection of women characters. It may be argued, also, that the collective title *Etudes de femmes* does not denote a setting, as

²⁴⁶ E.g., *La Bataille*, *Les Trois Cardinaux*, and many other announced titles.

²⁴⁷ *LF*, p. 103. It is possible that Balzac meant "une collection originale de trois ..."

²⁴⁸ Lov. Coll., A 250, fols. 1-4. This letter is mutilated in the *Corr.*, p. 156. Of these tales, *Sarrasine* is now in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; *Le Devoir d'une femme (Adieu)* is in the "Etudes philosophiques"; all the others are in the "Scènes de la vie privée."

²⁴⁹ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 18. The first tale never appeared; the second was placed in the "Scènes de la vie privée," *Fur.*, Vol. II.

²⁵⁰ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 18. Item 1 is now in the "Etudes philosophiques"; 2, 4, and 5 never appeared; 3 and 6 are in the "Scènes de la vie privée."

²⁵¹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 470.

does "Scènes de la vie privée" or "Scènes de la vie de province," since it is too general and vague. However, Balzac preserved the collective title in two stories, *Etude de femme* and *Autre Etude de femme*; the latter includes seven portraits of women. These might be divided into two groups: good women and "femmes légères." The four types defined in the first group are: (1) "la femme d'autrefois—la grande dame"; (2) "la femme moderne—la femme comme il faut"²⁵² ou la femme élégante"; (3) "la femme bourgeoise"; (4) "la femme-auteur." The three types of the second group are concretely depicted in separate episodes narrating the punishments meted out to these "femmes légères." The first is Charlotte,²⁵³ Henri de Marsay's first love; the tale is concluded by Bianchon, who says that her death "est une des plus belles que je connaisse." The second sketch is that of Rosina,²⁵⁴ whose horrible punishment occurred during the French campaign in Russia. The last portrait of an adulteress is that of Mme de Merret, the heroine of *La Grande Bretèche*.

Balzac sought to portray women in most aspects of their social and private lives. His list of *femmes vertueuses* and *femmes criminelles*²⁵⁵ proves that he ran almost the whole gamut of womankind—not, however, under the heading of *Etudes de femmes*. The projection of this work shows, nevertheless, that Balzac's evolving plan was a living, growing idea; that the shifting and adaptation of stories was a search for a harmonized and broader scheme. Although he did not completely carry out this project, he partly fulfilled it in a mosaic of stories included in the *Etudes de mœurs*, which is, of course, an enlargement of the narrow scope of the *Etudes de femmes*.

A few weeks after the *Scènes de la vie privée* had been given to the public, Balzac turned to the re-working of old and the writing of new tales of the philosophical type. To the twelve stories originally grouped with *La Peau de chagrin*, under the collective title *Romans et contes philosophiques*, Balzac now gave a briefer term, *Contes philosophiques*,²⁵⁶ and, omitting the novel, reprinted them with the Introduction by Philarète

²⁵² Émile Blondet gives a detailed description of "la femme comme il faut." It originally appeared as an essay published by Balzac in the collective volumes, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1840).

²⁵³ "La Femme du médecin," in *Contes bruns*.

²⁵⁴ "La Maîtresse de notre colonel," *ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *OD.*, III, 413.

²⁵⁶ Published by Charles Gosselin in 2 vols., in octavo. Announced in the *Bibliographie de la France*, June 16, 1832.

Chasles in early June, 1832. The distribution of the stories in the two volumes differs from the 1831 edition, but there are no real changes in titles or in contents. This reprint was intended, says Balzac in the "Avis,"²⁵⁷ to complete the set for those who bought the first edition of *La Peau de chagrin* in August, 1831.

In this same "Avis" Balzac announced a forthcoming volume, *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*. Indeed, no sooner had he published the *Contes philosophiques* than he began on this new volume, to which he often referred as "le quatrième volume."²⁵⁸ Since, in the 1831 edition of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* there were three volumes, this might be considered as the fourth volume of the whole collection. On the last cover page of the volume, among several announcements, is one which seems to confirm our view: "*Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*, formant le tome IV/ des *Romans et Contes*, troisième édition, ou le tome V de la première/édition de la *Peau de chagrin*. 1 vol. in-8, avec vignettes." This collective work was composed of four philosophical stories, two of which Balzac wrote in 1831, and two in 1832.

On June 10 the author wrote his mother to see Gosselin, the publisher, to whom he was promising "le manuscrit qui doit terminer le quatrième volume des *Contes* [*philosophiques*]."²⁵⁹ Ultimately the volume ended with *Louis Lambert*, an autobiographical piece of fiction never previously published. In one of his self-deluding moods, Balzac informed Mme Carraud, on July 2, 1832, that he had but a few pages to add and that she should have the volume in a fortnight.²⁶⁰ Yet it was far from being ready on July 20, for he then shared his fears and hopes about it with his sister: "... ce quatrième volume de *Contes philosophiques* doit être une dernière réponse à mes ennemis et doit faire pressentir une incontestable supériorité."²⁶¹ The volume was finally on sale in October²⁶² and contained: *Maître Cornélius*, *Madame Firmiani*, *L'Auberge rouge*, and *Louis Lambert*. This was the first volume-publication of the four stories; however, the first three had previously appeared in *La Revue de Paris*. As the collective title, *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*, indicates, the tales were in a philosophical vein—hence in key with the central idea of *La Peau de*

²⁵⁷ OD., III, 405.

²⁵⁸ LF., pp. 77, 91.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁶⁰ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 63.

²⁶¹ LF., p. 91.

²⁶² Published by Charles Gosselin, in 1 vol., in octavo. Announced in the *Bibliographie de la France*, October 20, 1832.

chagrin and the twelve old stories grouped with it. We now proceed to an examination of these narratives.

Baldensperger²⁶³ thinks that Balzac was irritated by Sir Walter Scott's historical inaccuracy in *Quentin Durward*, and quotes Mme Surville as saying that Balzac "y riposte par *Maître Cornélius*." In the biography of her brother she adds: "... il trouvait que Walter Scott avait étrangement défiguré Louis XI, roi encore mal compris, selon lui. Cette colère lui fit composer *Maître Cornélius*, ouvrage où il met Louis XI en scène."²⁶⁴ In view of the fact, however, that both portrayals of the king derive from the same sources, they are alike, maintains Professor Dargan²⁶⁵ in his study. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Balzac was also annoyed by Scott's topographical errors, for he says: "Malgré la singulière fantaisie que l'auteur de *Quentin Durward* a eue de placer le château royal de Plessis-lez-Tours sur une hauteur, il faut se résoudre à le laisser où il était à cette époque, dans un fond, protégé de deux côtés par le Cher et la Loire."²⁶⁶ But as to the location of the castle, Professor George D. Morris²⁶⁷ says that "both Scott and Balzac are right." In all likelihood the castle was built on slightly rising ground in the middle of a large valley. Both L.-J. Arigon and Pierre Abraham²⁶⁸ assert that *Maître Cornélius* had its inception (between 1826 and 1828) in a projected historical novel, alluded to by Balzac as "un ouvrage consciencieux (*Le Capitaine des Boutefeux*), dont le sujet était pris dans les tems les plus orageux du 15^e siècle."²⁶⁹ This is precisely the period that Balzac depicted in *Maître Cornélius* (1831). Another interesting source is E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Fräulein von Scuderi*,²⁷⁰ in which the obsession of a jeweler for his own work drives him to commit a series of murders. This general situation is paralleled in the case of the miser Cornélius. The vital interest, however, as pointed out by Professor Morris,²⁷¹ is centered in the figure of Cornélius, "the victim of his own avarice," and the devastating effects of the passion upon his personality.

²⁶³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 67, 108.

²⁶⁴ Surville, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

²⁶⁵ Art. cit. in *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 616.

²⁶⁶ *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques* (1832), p. 85.

²⁶⁷ See *Three Stories by Balzac*, p. 183.

²⁶⁸ *Les Débuts littéraires*, pp. 237-38; *Créatures chez Balzac*, p. 68.

²⁶⁹ Cited by Pierre Abraham, *ibid.*, p. 103. Also see above, p. 27.

²⁷⁰ Traduit de l'allemand par M. Loève-Veimars (Paris, 1830).

²⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. xxvi-xxvii. Cf. also "Balzac's Treatment of History in *Maître Cornélius*," *Philological Quarterly*, X (1931), 356.

This continues Balzac's fundamental principle, as expressed in the *Peau de chagrin*, and for this reason the author from the start placed the narrative among the philosophical tales.

The first publication of the story was incomplete. This fact caused a growing coolness between Balzac and Amédée Pichot, the editor of the *Revue de Paris*, in which *Maître Cornélius* appeared in December, 1831. Spoelberch de Lovenjoul explains the misunderstanding: "*La Revue de Paris* inséra, sans que l'auteur fût mis à même d'en corriger les épreuves, l'une des plus intéressantes études philosophiques de Balzac: *Maître Cornélius*."²⁷² The publication of the curtailed and uncorrected manuscript sent Balzac into a fury. He declared everywhere, and wrote to Zulma Carraud on January 19, 1832, that his "*article Cornélius* [était] massacré par le directeur."²⁷³ It appears, says M. Bouteron, that Pichot did not hesitate to cut out a few sentences here and there "pour bien tomber en pages."²⁷⁴ Explanations and excuses by Pichot only aggravated the situation, and in March, 1833, Balzac broke his connection with the *Revue de Paris* entirely.

The character of Cornélius, the personification of avarice, parallels that of King Louis XI, whose banker and friend he was. The old Lombard, a somnambulist, hides his treasures in his sleep. On awakening, he does not remember and believes himself robbed. Two of his apprentices, accused of the theft, lose their lives unjustly; but the third brings about the downfall of the miser. This young man, Georges d'Estouteville, is of noble birth and the lover of the Comtesse Marie de Saint-Vallier, the favorite daughter of the king. In order to gain access to her apartment Georges disguises himself as an apprentice and so is admitted into the house of the miser, which adjoins that of the Comtesse de Saint-Vallier. His disguise is discovered, but with the help of the countess his innocence is proved. Who, then, is robbing the miser? The king shrewdly discovers the plight of the banker and thus brings his career to an end. The book form contains an inserted passage which clarifies the connection of *Maître Cornélius* with *La Peau de chagrin*:

L'Idee la plus vivace et la mieux matérialisée de toutes les idées humaines, l'idée par laquelle l'homme se représente lui-même en créant en dehors de lui cet être tout fictif, nommé *la propriété*, ce démon moral lui enfonçait à chaque instant ses griffes acérées dans le cœur. ... Ses veilles durent être affreuses; il

²⁷² *Une Page perdue de H. de Balzac*, p. 42.

²⁷³ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 47.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 2.

[Cornélius] était seul aux prises avec la nuit, le silence, le remords, la peur, avec toutes les pensées que l'homme a le mieux personnifiées, instinctivement peut-être, ... cet homme si puissant, ... dut succomber aux horreurs du supplice qu'il s'était créé. Tué par quelques pensées plus aiguës que toutes celles auxquelles il avait résisté jusqu'alors, il se coupa la gorge avec un rasoir.²⁷⁵

Excessive miserliness destroys the miser himself. This philosophical study of the effects of a devouring passion forms an integral part not only of the collection under consideration but ultimately of the *Etudes philosophiques*.

Balzac placed *Madame Firmiani*²⁷⁶ in the *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*; but, since the tale did not depict the detrimental influence of exaggerated thought or passion, it did not belong there: he really intended to place the work in the projected volumes of the *Etudes de femmes*,²⁷⁷ as he explained to Mame, who was to publish the *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*: "Aussitôt que le IV^e volume de mes *Contes philosophiques* sera épuisé, j'en retirerai *Mme Firmiani* qui entrera dans les *Etudes de femmes*. Ce IV^e volume ayant 27 feuilles et *Mme Firmiani* trois feuilles, je n'aurai rien à y remplacer, 24 feuilles étant suffisantes."²⁷⁸ It was Charles Gosselin, however, who actually published Volume IV of the collection in October, 1832, and to him Balzac gave similar instructions: "Dans le quatrième [volume] je retrancherai *Madame Firmiani*. Le volume a vingt-sept feuilles, elle n'en a que trois. Ainsi, le volume peut rester avec vingt-quatre sans danger, d'autant [plus] qu'il y aura une demi-feuille ajoutée dans [*Louis*] *Lambert*."²⁷⁹ As has been shown above, the projected *Etudes de femmes* had been abandoned; therefore, Balzac temporarily shifted *Madame Firmiani* to the first edition of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne,"²⁸⁰ in order to supply the required number of pages for these volumes. Ultimately, in 1842, he placed the story in the "Scènes de la vie privée,"²⁸¹ where it rightfully belongs, for it is in this subdivision that he gives a series of portraits of women who are, says Davin, "marquées du même sceau, celui du sentiment égarant un moment la vertu. ... la femme n'est jamais fautive que par passion."²⁸² Balzac's first conception of *Mme Firmiani*, as it stands in his notebook, suggests that the heroine might not

²⁷⁵ *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques* (1832), pp. 129-30.

²⁷⁶ This story first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, February, 1832.

²⁷⁷ See above, pp. 67-69.

²⁸⁰ *Mme Béchet*, 1835; Vol. IV.

²⁷⁸ Lov. Coll., A 250, fols. 1-4.

²⁸¹ *Fur.*, Vol. I. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

²⁷⁹ Lov. Coll., A 281, fol. 140.

²⁸² Lov., *Hist.*, p. 54.

have been qualified for his list of "femmes vertueuses,"²⁸³ but he ultimately portrayed, under the name of Mme Firmiani, a superior type of woman. Like *La Bourse* (also finally classified in the "Scènes de la vie privée"), *Madame Firmiani* is an optimistic work. The heroine, serious, intelligent, and noble, is the talk of the town. She is devoted to Octave de Camps, who, so runs the rumor, has lost his fortune because of her. After the death of her husband she marries Octave secretly at Gretna Green and makes him pay his father's debts. When his name is thus cleared, she announces their marriage. Octave's old uncle, M. de Bourbonne, touched by Mme Firmiani's actions and words, says to her: "Ma nièce, ... autrefois nous faisions l'amour, aujourd'hui vous aimez."²⁸⁴ Thus he emphasizes the contrast between women of the old regime and those of modern times.

Balzac told Charles Rabou, in a letter dated May 18, 1831, that he wrote *L'Auberge rouge*²⁸⁵ as a relief from his labors on *La Peau de chagrin*. He took this "distraction" somewhat strenuously, since in the same letter he continues: "Je suis en ce moment à cheval sur un crime, et je mange, je me couche dans *l'Auberge rouge*, de manière à donner, mardi matin ... un joli petit manuscrit ... une copie sans ratures, léchée, pourléchée, coquettement corrigée."²⁸⁶ In order to provide a setting for his story he asks Rabou for exact details concerning the Republican Army in Germany. Here Balzac's theory of the ravaging influence of thought upon personality is realistically portrayed. According to Davin, it is in this tale that "les plus sévères déductions du thème général"²⁸⁷ of the *Etudes philosophiques* converge in the secret remorse which causes the disintegration of Maurice's personality. His overwrought nerves, under the continual remembrance of the crime, effect the complete disorganization of his system and his eventual death. This outcome naturally brings the story in line with *La Peau de chagrin*. In *L'Auberge rouge*, the plan of the murder is conceived by one man and involuntarily transmitted to the mind of another, who carries it out. The transference of thought is a psychic phenomenon now acknowledged by many psychologists. Balzac's imagination creates a situation, as in *Le Réquisitionnaire*, in which an idea

²⁸³ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 44.

²⁸⁴ *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*, p. 177.

²⁸⁵ This story first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, August 10-27, 1831. See Ruth B. Dunn, "Variations in the First and Second Editions of Balzac's *L'Auberge rouge*" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1924).

²⁸⁶ *Corr.*, pp. 85-86.

²⁸⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 204.

leads to definite action. The author makes a distinction between fact and the idea which begets it; he contrasts divine and human justice; he proves that man's own conscience can be far more terrible in its devastating effects than the death, even of an innocent man, administered by law.

In the 1837 edition of *L'Auberge rouge*,²⁸⁸ on the back of the title-page, Balzac gave a quotation omitted in the subsequent editions of the story: "Une idée causer des souffrances physiques, hein! qu'en dis-tu? *Etudes philosophiques*, t. XXII, *Histoire intellectuelle de L. Lambert*, 3^e éd." The later omission of this quotation is regrettable, for it makes clear his purpose and the relation of the story to the basic principle of the philosophical tales. That Mauricey suffered morally and physically amid his blood-stained wealth, that he was pursued by remorse for his crime, is reason enough for Balzac's grouping *L'Auberge rouge* with the philosophical tales and later keeping it consistently in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

The *Notice biographique sur Louis Lambert* concludes the collective volume of the *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*. It deals with Balzac's own "état d'âme," his theories, his treatise on the will—in fact, it contains more concerning the author's childhood, youth, and beliefs than any of his semi-autobiographical works, such as *La Peau de chagrin*, *Albert Savarus*, *César Birotteau*, or Part II of *Illusions perdues*. On this point Champfleury, Bettelheim, and Curtius²⁸⁹ agree, despite Mme Surville's assertion that only the first part of *Louis Lambert* portrays her brother.²⁹⁰

The first conception of *Louis Lambert*, although under a different title, dates back to 1827 or 1828. In the "Avertissement"²⁹¹ to *Le Gars (Les Chouans)*, Balzac gives a fictitious biography of the author, "Victor Morillon," one of his own pen-names. This life, maintains Pierre Abraham,²⁹² anticipates in many points the biography of *Louis Lambert*. Balzac actually began the novel in June, 1832, and finished it in July of the same year. Greatly preoccupied with *Louis Lambert*, he spoke of it at length in letters written in 1832 and the early part of 1833. His ambition in this work was to emulate Goethe and Byron.²⁹³ His hopes for a good sale and popularity ran high.²⁹⁴ On November 26, 1832, he wrote from Nemours to

²⁸⁸ *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XVII (Delloye et Lecou).

²⁸⁹ Balzac au collège, p. 32; Balzac, pp. 125-26; Balzac, sein Leben, sein Werk, p. 315 and *passim*.

²⁹⁰ Surville, *op. cit.*, p. 20. See also Gautier, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁹¹ Lov. Coll., A 13, fols. 1-6. See above, pp. 27, 29.

²⁹² *Créatures chez Balzac*, pp. 79-88.

²⁹³ *LF.*, p. 91.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Charles Gosselin: "*Louis Lambert*, œuvre de mélancolie ne nuira pas plus à la vente des *Romans et Contes* [philosophiques] que *Atala* n'a nui au *Génie du christianisme*. Il popularisera cette longue entreprise."²⁹⁵ While supposedly resting at Aix in September, 1832, Balzac wrote to Zulma Carraud of laborious emendations and additions: "J'ai comme une ourse léché mon petit. ... En somme, je suis satisfait, c'est bien; c'est une œuvre de profonde mélancolie et de science."²⁹⁶ George Sand approved of the novel, which she called "votre beau et bon livre,"²⁹⁷ while Paul Bourget said that *Louis Lambert* was the "monographie de sa [Balzac's] propre intelligence."²⁹⁸

The center of interest in *Louis Lambert* is not the plot, which is very slight, but the psychology of Balzac.²⁹⁹ This work particularly reflects the author's readings on mysticism and his study of Swedenborg's writings. *Louis Lambert* showed progress in the development of the theory that a ruling passion or obsessive interest in any one thing destroys personality. Thought introverted, so to speak, prodding into the innermost parts of the soul, or, in the words of Bellessort, into "les mystères du moi, dans les abîmes de la personnalité humaine,"³⁰⁰ leads to the insanity and ultimately to the death of Lambert. Balzac himself often conceived of thought as a physical entity. His *alter ego*, Louis Lambert, says: "Aussi, la Pensée m'apparaissait-elle comme une puissance toute physique, accompagnée de ses innombrables générations. Elle était une nouvelle humanité sous une autre forme."³⁰¹ An idea, Balzac said in *L'Auberge rouge*, can cause physical suffering; and to prove his theory he describes thought thus: "Si, par exemple, je pense vivement à l'effet que produirait la lame de mon canif en entrant dans mon doigt, j'y ressens tout à coup une douleur aiguë comme si je m'étais réellement coupé: il n'y a de moins que le sang."³⁰² This aspect of the reality of thought is succinctly expressed by Félix Davin: "*La lame use le fourreau*, dit le peuple. M. de Balzac, lui, écrit *Louis Lambert* ... Pour Louis Lambert, y dit-il, *la Volonté, la Pensée*

²⁹⁵ Lov. Coll., A 287, fols. 103-24.

²⁹⁶ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 71.

²⁹⁷ Art. cit., *Nouvelles littéraires*, July 26, 1930.

²⁹⁸ Introduction to the *Répertoire de la Comédie humaine de H. de Balzac*, by A. Cerf-berr and J. Christophe, p. ix.

²⁹⁹ See Chancel, *op. cit.*, p. 459.

³⁰¹ *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*, p. 343.

³⁰⁰ Bellessort, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 319.

étaient des forces vives."³⁰³ He considers this novel the most penetrating expression of the fundamental principle of the *Etudes philosophiques*, "la pensée tuant le penseur." It is evident why Balzac grouped *Louis Lambert* with the philosophical tales and placed it permanently in *Etudes philosophiques*, of which it is as truly a part as is *La Peau de chagrin*. In the Preface to the *Livre mystique* (1835), in which the novel was included, Balzac explains his work: "*Louis Lambert* est le mysticisme pris sur le fait, le voyant marchant à sa vision, conduit au ciel par les faits, par ses idées, par son tempérament; là est l'histoire des voyants."³⁰⁴

Louis Lambert, *Séraphita*, *Les Proscrits*, and *Jésus-Christ en Flandre*, all in the same category, deal with the same theory, which includes elements of mysticism, Swedenborgianism, and pseudo-science. Balzac's idealistic theory of thought and of the will or soul is considered by Taine, in his classical essay³⁰⁵ on Balzac, as romance in the field of psychology and metaphysics. In this novel Balzac once more applies the principle of *La Peau de chagrin* and, generally, of the *Romans et contes philosophiques*. Thought can be the cause either of good or of evil; an idea can find expression in a devouring desire or ambition, as in *La Peau de chagrin*; in remorse, as in *L'Auberge rouge* or *Melmoth réconcilié*; or in maternal and paternal love, as in *Le Réquisitionnaire* and *Un Drame au bord de la mer*. In all these philosophical tales thought is transformed into sentiment and then into action, good or bad—usually bad.

Louis Lambert is the story of the school days of a sensitive and intelligent youth to whom the rigid discipline of the college brings great suffering of mind and body. The second phase of his short life begins in Paris with his struggles as a student in the clutches of poverty. Ill-health brings him back to provincial life, where he meets Pauline de Villenoix, the only one who understands his philosophical ravings. He falls in love and is to marry her; but the absorption of his mind in metaphysics completely detaches him from daily life, and he becomes insane. His fiancée alone understands his folly and devotes herself to him until his death. Balzac's

³⁰³ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 202. In this connection, M. B. Ferguson in a recent study states: "La Volonté apparaît surtout chez Balzac comme une force agissante dont le moteur prédominant est la passion. ... La Volonté ... régit la conduite extérieure." The superior form of this "Volonté" is "la pensée" (*La Volonté dans la "Comédie humaine" de Balzac*, pp. 92-94).

³⁰⁴ *OD.*, III, 424.

³⁰⁵ *Nouveaux Essais de critique et d'histoire*, "Balzac," pp. 63-70.

doctrine as held by Lambert, coupled with his passionate temperament, results in a disordered mind and an untimely end.

Of the four stories just discussed, three³⁰⁶ were permanently classed in the *Etudes philosophiques* for very good reasons. Yet Balzac did not include them in the third (marked fourth³⁰⁷) edition (March, 1833), of the *Romans et contes philosophiques*³⁰⁸—a collective title then appearing for the last time before it gave way to the more comprehensive *Etudes philosophiques*. When Charles Gosselin brought out the first edition of *La Peau de chagrin*, little did he imagine that from August, 1831, to March, 1833, the publication of Balzac's philosophical stories would be one of his chief occupations. In a letter to Mame of September 30, 1832,³⁰⁹ Balzac indicated that he was already planning a fourth (really a third) edition of the *Romans et contes philosophiques*. He confirmed this plan in a letter to his mother in October: "J'ai aussi un remaniement des *Contes philosophiques* pour la quatrième édition, qui se fera aux environs d'avril."³¹⁰ This edition entailed a good deal of labor, in revisions and additions, although no new stories were added. Toward the end of January, 1833, he tells Mme Hanska: "Je travaille dix-huit heures par jour. Je me suis aperçu des défauts de style qui déparent *la Peau de chagrin*; je la corrige pour la rendre irréprochable; mais après deux mois de travail, ... je découvre encore une centaine de fautes. Ce sont des chagrins de poète."³¹¹ Early in March, 1833, Gosselin put the four volumes on sale. The first two contained *La Peau de chagrin*, omitted from the *Contes philosophiques*, and the last two were identical in distribution of stories with the two volumes of the June, 1832, edition. From a letter to Gosselin dated November 13, 1833, we learn that Balzac was not satisfied with this edition; he considered it "mal conçue et mal fabriquée."³¹² Be that as it may, the note-

³⁰⁶ All except *Madame Firmiani*.

³⁰⁷ See *OD.*, III, 406-7. Balzac explains the confusion in numbering these editions thus: The first edition was published in August, 1831; the second was published in 3 vols., September, 1831, and was designated as the third on account of its two printings (which should have been marked as the second and the third). The fourth edition (or the third, should the two printings be considered as one edition) was published in 4 vols., March, 1833.

³⁰⁸ Published by Charles Gosselin in 4 vols.

³⁰⁹ *Lov. Coll.*, A 250, fols. 1-4.

³¹⁰ *LF.*, p. 128.

³¹¹ *LEt.*, I, 7.

³¹² *Lov. Coll.*, A 287, fols. 103-24. See also *Revue bleue*, XX (1903), 644.

worthy fact about all these philosophical tales is that they form the nucleus of the *Etudes philosophiques*, the second great division of the *Comédie humaine*, just as the 1830 edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée* is the basis of the *Etudes de mœurs*, the first great division of Balzac's final structure.

With this third edition of the *Romans et contes philosophiques* ends the first period of Balzac's literary career.³¹³ It is pertinent, therefore, to review briefly his achievements and the progress of his changing plans up to 1833.

By this time he had issued six publications under four collective titles and had announced two projected collective titles: the *Scènes de la vie politique* and the *Scènes de la vie militaire*. Of these, only extracts had as yet appeared. Three of the six publications were enlargements of previous editions. Under the first collective title, the *Scènes de la vie privée*, the author grouped together fifteen domestic stories similar in theme and atmosphere; under the *Romans et contes philosophiques* and the *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques* he assembled seventeen stories developing the same basic idea, to wit, that exaggerated thought and passion may disorganize personality.

No shifting of stories occurs within this period, but after 1833 ten³¹⁴ out of those thirty-two tales were moved temporarily or permanently to other subdivisions. One, *La Comédie du diable*, was never admitted to the *Comédie humaine*. Of the six tales in the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, two were later moved temporarily to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" but were ultimately restored to their original classification. Of the fifteen titles in the second edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, nine were new. Five of these were shifted: three temporarily, one to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" and two to the "Scènes de la vie de province"; and two permanently, one to the "Scènes de la vie de province" and the other to the "Etudes philosophiques."

From the *Romans et contes philosophiques*, as has just been said, one tale was discarded; two were moved to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"—one permanently, the other temporarily; this latter was ultimately classified in the "Scènes de la vie privée." To this group was also added permanently one tale from the *Nouveaux Contes philosophiques*.

These temporary misplacements were due, in some instances, to the exigency of filling a definite number of pages in the new volumes. In

³¹³ See above, p. 79.

³¹⁴ All these shiftings are indicated in the table (p. 180).

1840 Balzac, commenting upon the arrangement of his earlier volumes, stated that he was aware of certain defects which had arisen from the "nécessité où se trouve l'auteur de publier séparément les différentes parties d'un grand tout."³¹⁵ However, when the number of novels for the new subdivisions had increased, the author rearranged his classifications logically and restored some of the misplaced stories to their original rubrics. It is remarkable that, even in the first period of Balzac's literary career, there is a rather high percentage of stories—twenty-six out of thirty-two—that were, at the very beginning, placed in the groups to which they were ultimately assigned. Such a high percentage of correct classification from the start points to Balzac's conscious primary urge toward order and unity in his writings; this order becomes characteristic of his way of thinking and is also disciplinary in its effects. His grouping already represents two major types of fiction—contemporary manners and philosophical tales—which anticipated the two grand divisions of the second period, the *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle* and the *Etudes philosophiques*.

Meanwhile, in the *avis*, prefaces, introductions, and in the letters of this period, Balzac alludes to and discusses his various plans aligning the fields and the scope of his writings. Out of these tentative programs gradually developed the one plan toward which he had been feeling his way in these six publications.

IV. SECOND PERIOD IN BALZAC'S LITERARY CAREER: 1833-37

Before we enter upon a discussion of the second period of Balzac's career certain literary devices which had intruded into his work should be recognized and dealt with as an influence in the ripening of his scheme. In the autumn of 1832 he had been making plans to publish, toward the middle of 1833, a complete edition³¹⁶ of his works to date. In the ensuing revision of previously published novels he must have become aware of the possibilities for expansion, as well as of certain methods unconsciously used.

We shall note three factors or devices which led to Balzac's announcement in the home of Mme Surville and to future developments. First, he recognized that certain passages held germs of plots for future novels. For

³¹⁵ Preface to the first edition of *Pierrette*, OD., III, 544.

³¹⁶ This later became the *Etudes de mœurs*, published between 1833 and 1837.

example, in *Les Dangers de l'inconduite* (*Gobseck*),³¹⁷ a lawyer, Derville, retells in the *salon* of Mme de Grandlieu the professional experiences related to him by Gobseck: "Hier une tragédie: un père s'asphyxie parce qu'il ne peut plus nourrir ses enfants ... un vieux négociant sur le penchant d'une faillite, une mère qui veut cacher la faute de son fils."³¹⁸ This passage remained unchanged in the edition of 1832; but Balzac, in 1834, added the following plot: "Un grand sur le déclin de la faveur, et qui, faute d'argent, va perdre le fruit de ses efforts."³¹⁹ The first quotation suggests the theme of *Père Goriot* (1834), even though Goriot died a natural death. The "négociant" could easily be identified with César Birotteau, who died at the age of fifty-one. To Balzac still in his thirties, the time at which he began the novel at Frapesle³²⁰ in April, 1834, fifty-one might have seemed "vieux," or in writing he may have changed his idea of the character's age. "Une mère qui veut cacher la faute de son fils" is probably Agathe Rouget in *La Rabouilleuse* (*Les Deux Frères*).³²¹ Philippe Bridau had stolen his aunt's savings; everyone knew his guilt, but his mother, to protect her favorite son, pretended that she took the money. "Je l'ai prise [la somme] pour Philippe, j'ai cru pouvoir la remettre avant que vous ne vous en aperçussiez."³²² On looking for her silver, to pawn it and replace the stolen sum, she found only a receipt from the broker's shop. "Un grand sur le déclin ..." is perhaps an allusion to Rabourdin in *Les Employés*, an honest and superior man, who after six years of work on an administrative plan failed because of bureaucratic corruption. His opponent, M. Baudoyer, bought the support of the influential men at first in favor of Rabourdin.³²³

A passage of similar prophetic nature in *La Peau de chagrin* has remained essentially the same in subsequent editions. Émile, the journalist and drinking companion of Raphaël, addresses Aquilina, "une femme légère": "As-tu donc, comme ta patronne, un noble et terrible *conspira-*

³¹⁷ Cf. Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Miss Preston does not show the evolution of the passage.

³¹⁸ *Scènes de la vie privée* (1830), I, 194-95.

³¹⁹ "Scènes de la vie parisienne" (1834), I, 258. In all subsequent editions the passage remained the same.

³²⁰ *LEt.*, I, 149. See also *Corr. Carraud*, pp. 210, 276.

³²¹ These later titles reach beyond the period now considered.

³²² *Les Deux Frères*, éd. Souverain (1842), I, 193.

³²³ *La Femme supérieure*, éd. Werdet (1838), II, 148, 177.

teur qui t'aime et sache mourir pour toi? ... dit vivement Émile réveillé par cette apparence de poésie. — Je l'ai eu! ... répondit-elle; mais la guillotine était ma rivale."³²⁴ This information concerning Aquilina's executed lover leads to the subplot in *Melmoth réconcilié* (1835).³²⁵ Castanier, having sold his soul to Melmoth, had acquired the latter's power, through which he learned that Aquilina had deceived him and had hidden in her closet his rival, a young officer. When Castanier forced him to come out, the officer challenged him to a duel. Castanier answered: "Pourquoi vous tuerai-je? Vous avez sur le cou une ligne rouge que je vois. La guillotine vous attend. Oui, vous mourrez en place de grève. ... Vous *conspirez* contre le gouvernement."³²⁶

Second, during this re-working Balzac saw that a few characters reappeared in his pages: Pauline de Villenoix, Captain Bianchi, and Mme de Beauséant.³²⁷ Not only had the author made some use of reappearing characters at this early period (December, 1832), but he definitely documented them as they appeared in the earlier story—for instance, in the case of Captain Bianchi. This method was frequently employed after 1835. In the first edition of *Les Marana*, a reference to the captain led Balzac to give the gist of the story in which he had appeared previously:

Au siège de Tarragone, les Italiens perdirent leur célèbre capitaine Bianchi, le même qui, pendant la campagne, avait parié manger le cœur d'une sentinelle espagnole, et le mangea. Ce divertissement de bivouac a été raconté récemment dans un livre³²⁸ où se trouvent, sur le 6^e de ligne, des détails qu'il est inutile de répéter ici.

Balzac continues with an account of Bianchi's military bravery and his death, concluding with an apology: "Cette digression était nécessaire pour expliquer comment le 6^e de ligne entra le premier dans Tarragone, et pourquoi le désordre dégénéra si promptement en un léger pillage."³²⁹ By such means the novelist established points of connection between individual stories, but the arresting fact is that reappearing characters existed in 1832, notwithstanding M. Bouteron's statement that one would

³²⁴ *La Peau de chagrin* (1st ed.), I, 194. Italics ours.

³²⁵ See below, p. 114.

³²⁶ *Études philosophiques*, éd. Werdet, XXII, 130-34. Italics ours.

³²⁷ Appearing respectively in *Le Curé de Tours*, *Les Marana*, and *La Duchesse de Langeais*.

³²⁸ *Contes bruns*, "Une Conversation entre onze heures et minuit."

³²⁹ "Les Marana," *La Revue de Paris*, December, 1832, pp. 235-36.

seek "vainement la trace de ce procédé dans les premiers romans de Balzac publiés de 1829 à 1832, sa découverte ne semble pas antérieure à 1833."³³⁰ The artistic possibilities of reappearing characters as an effective device for unification in a growing plan must have struck Balzac with illuminating force.

Third, by 1832 the author conceived the idea of social classification, thereby introducing the sociological interests of his novels. Mme Carraud, in reading Part II of *Les Marana* (1832), saw this implication and criticized it as unsound: "... vous érigez en principe la nécessité des classifications sociales, et voulez parquer l'espèce humaine d'après le hasard de la naissance."³³¹ Balzac firmly answered that the principle of social classification is for him "indiscutable, ... c'est un point arrêté."³³² He held that a man is inevitably conditioned by his inheritance and environment,³³³ and in *Les Marana* he emphasized the fact that Juana and Diard belong to different "social species." From the data of Juana's inheritance and environment Balzac determines her behavior in certain circumstances and conditions. In like manner he characterizes her husband, Diard, by his habits of the "mauvais ton de l'armée, des mœurs de sa province et d'une incomplète éducation," and represents him as entirely "incapable de monter les hauts échelons de l'ordre social."³³⁴ This deterministic theory, based on observation of society,³³⁵ doubtless lay back of Balzac's idea of classifying mankind into groups, not only according to milieu but according to trades and professions as well.³³⁶ In 1839 he said: "Il n'y a plus d'originalité que dans les professions, de comique que dans les habitudes."³³⁷ Anticipating this theory, he had already adopted, in 1832, the approach and method of the biologist in arranging and classifying his material as if according to the established scientific laws. He recognized,

³³⁰ Introduction to Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue française (1935), I, xx. All subsequent references to this volume will be "N.R.F., I."

³³¹ *Corr. Carraud*, pp. 131-32.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³³³ Cf. theories of G. Saint-Hilaire. See below, sec. v.

³³⁴ *Con.*, XXIX, 107.

³³⁵ It is pertinent to add that 1832 was the year of Balzac's infatuation with the Marquis de Castries; he keenly felt the social barrier between them. This experience must have sharpened his growing conviction of the influence of environment and of social distinctions.

³³⁶ Cf. Merlant, *op. cit.*, p. 374; Preston, *op. cit.*, chap. iv.

³³⁷ Preface to *Une Fille d'Eve*, OD., III, 521.

nevertheless, that social differences do not have the complete fixity of natural laws.³³⁸ For artistic purposes, however, this method of grouping was precisely that needed later to present systematically the great wealth of material which French society offered.

To Balzac, working as critic and artist in the revision and arrangement of his works during the winter of 1832 and 1833, the three factors just discussed afforded a prospect, hitherto unperceived in its fulness, of expanding and unifying his novels into a complete whole in which all the component parts would be logically connected.

The crystallization of this conception can be traced in his correspondence. On September 22, 1832, he wrote to his mother of his plans for a complete edition (the later *Etudes de mœurs*): "J'offrirai ainsi un bel ensemble d'œuvres";³³⁹ in January, 1833, he informed Mme Hanska that he wished to "construire un monument, durable plus par la masse et par l'amas des matériaux que par la beauté de l'édifice";³⁴⁰ and by March, 1833, he seemed to feel certain of success, even if he had, as he says, "à travailler pendant trois ans," for, he adds, "il faut refaire, recorriger, mettre tout à l'état monumental."³⁴¹ These successive statements indicate a preoccupation with the scope and number of novels, with totality and massiveness rather than with artistry.

The strain of Balzac's work at that time was tremendous. He wrote to Mme Carraud that he lived in an atmosphere of ideas, plans, and conceptions "qui se croisent, bouillent, pétillent dans ma tête à me rendre fou."³⁴² By April, 1833, he was forced to seek rest at La Poudrerie. A month later he returned to Paris, where, according to M. Bouteron, he resumed "comme par magie, son grand travail, ses seize heures par jour et la plus grande somme de courage et d'inspiration."³⁴³ There, in white heat, Balzac hammered into shape an idea latent in his brain which was eventually to insure that unity and solidity which he sought for his work. This conception had behind it years of thinking and preparation and culminated in the joyous cry "Eureka!" uttered before his sister. The date of this announcement is open to dispute. Unfortunately, Mme Surville did not record this occurrence until 1856, twenty-three years later. It remains a question, therefore, whether she used her brother's exact words or wrote in the light of what he had accomplished since 1833. She states:

³³⁸ *Avant-propos*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

³⁴¹ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 137.

³³⁹ *LF.*, p. 120.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 129. Letter dated February, 1833.

³⁴⁰ *LEt.*, I, 4.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 147.

Ce ne fut que vers 1833, lors de la publication de son *Médecin de campagne*, qu'il pensa à relier tous ses personnages pour en former une société complète. Le jour où il fut illuminé de cette idée fut un beau jour pour lui! ... Saluez-moi, nous dit-il joyeusement, car je suis tout bonnement en train de devenir un génie! ... Il nous déroule alors son plan qui l'effrayait bien un peu; quelque vaste que fût son cerveau, il fallait du temps pour y emménager ce plan-là.³⁴⁴

Mme Surville here dates her brother's declaration as contemporary with the publication of *Le Médecin de campagne*, known to be in September, 1833. However, he had employed prior to that date, as shown above, a method of unity usually assumed as motivating his famous announcement, that of reappearing characters. Another tenet of unity, also prior to September, 1833, is evinced in his extended grouping of stories in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" (second subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*). The negotiations for their publication were already in process between May 29 and June 1, 1833. It is precisely in *Les Marana* and *La Duchesse de Langeais*, included in this grouping, that there are found earlier examples of reappearing characters. It seems impossible that he should not announce until September what he embodied in works prior to May. These facts lead me to believe that Balzac made his declaration in May, 1833, during the arrangements for the publication of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," rather than in September. Mme Surville continues her report as if in the words of Balzac: "Comme je me laisserai tranquillement traiter de *faiseur de nouvelles* à présent, tout en taillant mes pierres! Je me réjouis d'avance de l'étonnement des myopes quand ils verront le grand édifice qu'elles formeront." She tells of her brother's musing over his characters as if they were real people: "Je n'invente pas la nature humaine, je l'observe dans le passé et le présent, et je tâche de la peindre telle qu'elle est."³⁴⁵

The three outstanding points, we repeat, in Mme Surville's account are: (1) the correlation of characters; (2) the purpose to create a complete, representative society; (3) the vastness of the author's plan for co-ordination. The *plan* as here used by Balzac had undergone a modification. This word no longer connotes merely subjects and scope of his works; but now in 1833, according to the author's sister, it implies methods, guiding principles, the underlying theory of his writings, and their correspondences—in short, the *plan* has become a matter of procedure as well as of material and scope; it has developed into a whole scheme, for, as he says

³⁴⁴ Surville, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-97. Italics ours.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

of himself, it is not enough to be "un homme, il faut être un système."³⁴⁶

To perfect the scheme further steps were needed; some of these are recorded in Balzac's correspondence. As stated previously, on May 29—June 1, 1833, he informed Mme Hanska of his contract for the publication of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne";³⁴⁷ on August 19, 1833, he announced *Eugénie Grandet* as a story of the "Scènes de la vie de province."³⁴⁸ In the same month he wrote Gosselin, who was then expected to publish the whole work, that it would contain four series;³⁴⁹ and by the end of August he spoke to Mme Carraud of the "achèvement des *Etudes de mœurs*,"³⁵⁰ which, however, were still unfinished on October 24.³⁵¹ These statements indicate that by August, 1833, Balzac was in the process of co-ordinating the first three parts of the *Etudes de mœurs* and that his intentions for the *Etudes* were more comprehensive than those for the *Scènes de la vie privée* of 1830, or for the *Romans et contes philosophiques* of 1831.

While the publication of the *Etudes de mœurs* was going on, the novelist formulated plans for a parallel publication of the *Etudes philosophiques*,³⁵² the contract for which was signed with Werdet on July 19, 1834.³⁵³ Soon after this date he printed two prospectuses,³⁵⁴ which reiterated, in the main, his general statements of 1830 and 1831³⁵⁵—with, however, a new vision of the "petits faits" of everyday life: he will record all phases of individual and social activity, all classes of people whose actions, habits, and gestures he scrutinizes. He proposes to give minute descriptions of interiors, because, he says: "... de leur minutieuse description, s'exhale une révélation lumineuse du caractère de ceux qui les habitent, des passions et des intérêts qui les préoccupent, de toute leur vie en un mot."³⁵⁶

³⁴⁶ Quoted by Félix Davin, *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 50. In this connection it is interesting to note the report of another contemporary of Balzac, Théophile Gautier. He emphasizes the immensity of the plan (*op. cit.*, pp. 70-71). Still another, Edmond Werdet, at one time friend and publisher of Balzac, speaks of the plan as "une idée littéraire des plus heureuses ... de réunir en faisceau tous les personnages de ses [Balzac's] romans" This idea he calls "idée-type, idée-mère" from which derived first the *Etudes de mœurs* and later the *Comédie humaine* (*Portrait intime de Balzac*, p. 81).

³⁴⁷ *LEt.*, I, 27.

³⁵⁰ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 157.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³⁵¹ *LEt.*, I, 62.

³⁴⁹ *Corr.*, p. 181.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, I, 168, 170.

³⁵³ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, p. 398.

³⁵⁴ Reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 403-4.

³⁵⁵ See above, pp. 30, 38, 40.

³⁵⁶ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, p. 404.

There had been, as yet, no sign of definite co-ordination of parts; but on October 18-19, 1834, he gave for the first time an inclusive title for the "grande édition générale de l'œuvre qui, sous le titre d'*Etudes sociales*, comprendra tous ces fragments, ces fûts, ces chapiteaux, ces colonnes, bas-reliefs, murs, coupoles, enfin le monument qui sera laid ou beau, qui me vaudra le *plaudite cives* ou les gémonies."³⁵⁷ That the scheme was being gradually worked out is again confirmed by Balzac in a letter of October 26, when he writes to Mme Hanska concerning these *Etudes sociales*, which will be a "monument dans notre beau langage. Je crois qu'en 1838 les trois parties³⁵⁸ de cette œuvre gigantesque seront, sinon parachevées, du moins superposées, et qu'on pourra juger de la masse."³⁵⁹ The whole work, he continues, will describe, judge, and analyze man, society, and humanity. Then he gives a brief exposition of the scheme in its main parts. Balzac uses architectural terms: the *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle* is the foundation upon which the other two divisions will be built. In this division he intends to present social history in all aspects; to trace the history of the human heart, phase by phase, and to depict the three stages of life from childhood to old age; and to treat of politics, justice, and war. He will portray every type of man, every situation and manner of living in every social stratum; his *Etudes* will thus represent all social phases of French life. The *Etudes de mœurs*, in twenty-four volumes, will comprise the whole stage of human action.³⁶⁰

In the *Etudes philosophiques*, the second division of the projected *Etudes sociales*,³⁶¹ Balzac proposes to give the motivating causes and mechanism of action presented in the first division. This section is the *coulisse* which holds all the machinery controlling the action on the stage. The *Etudes philosophiques* will be more compact, and therefore contained in fifteen volumes.

In the third division, the *Etudes analytiques*, the author will analyze the underlying principles, primary motives of both causes and effects, and in this manner will establish interdependence among the three main parts. Part III, still more condensed, will be comprised of nine volumes only; the tripartite division of the whole work is here closely and definitely interrelated and unified.

³⁵⁷ *LEt.*, I, 196.

³⁵⁸ Meaning the *Etudes de mœurs*, *Etudes philosophiques*, *Etudes analytiques*.

³⁵⁹ *LEt.*, I, 205.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

³⁶¹ This title, although suggested in a letter to Mme Hanska, was not used for the publication discussed.

Balzac had discussed this scheme with his friend and critic, Félix Davin, who at the instigation of the author wrote two introductions, one to the *Etudes philosophiques*,³⁶² dated December 6, 1834; the other to the *Etudes de mœurs*,³⁶³ dated April 27, 1835. The novelist³⁶⁴ actually made contributions to both and frankly acknowledged his pen in the first; while later, publisher Hetzel³⁶⁵ disclosed the fact that Balzac had a hand in the second also. Both introductions amplify and develop the scheme succinctly given by the author to Mme Hanska. These documents are long winded and contain some irrelevant matter and many repetitions. Yet the Davin-Balzac discussion of the three main parts and of the six subdivisions of the *Etudes de mœurs* constitutes an important contribution to the subject.

This discussion adds that the systematic reappearances of characters link the novels one with another and give a unified and complete picture of life and movement; it emphasizes the evolutionary development of the scheme; it recognizes the function of Balzac as the historian³⁶⁶ of French society³⁶⁷ and the originator of what is now called the *roman social*; furthermore, it points to his untiring search for truth, because of which he cannot

faire choix entre le beau et le laid, le moral et le vicieux. ... Il doit, sous peine d'inexactitude et de mensonge, dire tout ce qui est, montrer tout ce qu'il voit. ... Enfin, n'a-t-il pas fallu tout savoir du monde, des arts et des sciences, pour

³⁶² Appeared first in the *Etudes philosophiques*, éd. Werdet, Vol. I; reprinted in *Lov., Hist.*, pp. 194-207.

³⁶³ Appeared first in the "Scènes de la vie privée" (3d ed.), Vol. I; see above, p. 25, n. 19.

³⁶⁴ *LEt.*, I, 222. See below, p. III.

³⁶⁵ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, *Autour de Honoré de Balzac*, p. 239. See below, p. 132.

³⁶⁶ In an article dated October, 1833, Balzac states: "Il y a dans tous les temps un homme de génie qui se fait le secrétaire de son époque. Homère, Aristote, Tacite, Shakespeare, L'Arétin, Machiavel, Rabelais, Bacon, Molière, Voltaire, ont tenu la plume sous la dictée de leurs siècles" (*Théorie de la démarche*, *OD.*, I, 584). Balzac hesitated as to whether he was the "historien" or the "secrétaire" of society, and used the two terms almost synonymously. In one instance only (so far as we know) has he made a clear distinction between the function of the historian and that of the secretary. In his *Avant-propos* Balzac stated: "La Société française allait être l'historien, je ne devais être que le secrétaire." That is, Society—the historian—dictated, and Balzac—the secretary—wrote down and kept the records.

³⁶⁷ In 1839 Balzac gave his reasons for choosing French society as the subject of his writings: "Les mœurs françaises sont, littérairement parlant, au-dessus de celles des autres pays comme variété de types, comme drame, comme esprit, comme mouvement; tout s'y dit, tout s'y pense, tout s'y fait" (Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*, *OD.*, III, 521).

avoir entrepris de configurer la société avec ses principes organiques et dissolvants, ses puissances et ses misères, ses différentes morales et ses infamies? ... Il voulait peindre les maisons et les intérieurs, les portraits et le costume, les replis du cœur et les aberrations de l'esprit, la science et le mysticisme, l'homme dans ses rapports avec les choses et avec la nature.³⁶⁸

The last portion of this statement shows Balzac chiefly interested in man as a social being. In that connection we note that his character sketches written between 1830 and 1831 had attested his interest in the individual, whom he saw as conditioned by a diversified and complex system of modern society outside of which he cannot exist. The titles of these sketches—*L'Épicier*, *Le Ministre*, *Le Banquier*, *Un Commis voyageur*³⁶⁹—are self-explanatory. He treated these individuals as representatives both of their trades or professions and of their social milieus. His preoccupation with social categories was again manifest in some of his early stories: in *La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote* (1829) Balzac had portrayed an apprentice group; in *Le Curé de Tours* (1832) he had depicted the ecclesiastical group, on the one hand, and the celibate, on the other; in *L'Illustre Gaudissart* (1833) he had devoted six pages to a disquisition on the traveling agent as an "espèce sociale"; again in *Histoire des Treize*, of the same year, he had given a cross-section of contemporary society comprising the nobility, the middle class, and the populace. It would seem that by 1833 his interest in the individual has broadened out; he is interested in him not only per se but as a member of a social group. For Balzac, "l'homme n'était que le détail [et] le moyen" to a study of society—his goal. The unity of the whole work has become for him completely vested in society.

From 1832 one can trace a sustained effort toward the *roman social*. Balzac found fiction restricted almost to one passion—love—and that usually idealized. He widened the scope of the novel, which with him became the *roman réaliste*—a social document, a comprehensive record of all human activities and the experiences of all milieus. He justly said of his works: "Ce sera ce qui se passe partout ... les choses sociales comme elles sont."³⁷⁰ Within this vast sociological synthesis the *roman social* was born. The trend may be readily recognized in the general title *Études de mœurs au XIX^e siècle* and in its six subdivisions, all indicative of the sociological range of the growing scheme.

In 1837, at the end of our present period, the Preface to *Illusions per-*

³⁶⁸ Lov., *Hist.*, pp. 54-57.

³⁶⁹ Reprinted in *OD.*, Vol. II.

³⁷⁰ Preface to *Le Livre mystique* (1835).

dues elucidated further Balzac's guiding principle: "L'état social adapte tellement les hommes à ses besoins et les déforme si bien, que nulle part les hommes n'y sont semblables à eux-mêmes, et qu'elle [la société] a créé autant d'*espèces* que de *professions*; qu'enfin l'humanité sociale présente autant de variétés que la zoologie."³⁷¹ This statement proves that Balzac had sensed the significance of scientific theory and sought to approximate its method by applying the laws of classification to society. Concurrently with this trend of thought grew up his plan of divisions and subdivisions in which he grouped his novels according to his own analyses of organized society, and in harmony with his intentions for each category, so that in the end each story has its particular niche in the complete whole.

The period from 1833 to 1837 is essentially that of the *Etudes de mœurs*. The author's notebook shows several proposed alignments of subdivisions, one of which suggests the final form adopted. The notation is:

<i>Scènes de la vie privée,</i>	introduction par George Sand
<i>Scènes de la vie du monde,</i>	préface par Mme Belloc
<i>Scènes du salon,</i>	préface par Mme D'Abrantès
<i>Scènes du village</i> ³⁷²	

The first subdivision remained unchanged; the second and the third clearly suggest the later "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; and the fourth obviously anticipates the "Scènes de la vie de campagne." Of the ultimate six subdivisions, only half (the "Scènes de la vie privée," the "Scènes de la vie de province," and the "Scènes de la vie parisienne") were published between 1834 and 1837; the other half (the "Scènes de la vie politique," the "Scènes de la vie militaire," and the "Scènes de la vie de campagne") were merely announced in 1835 to appear soon.

Balzac called each subdivision a "cadre,"³⁷³ by which he meant a setting for stories alike both in coloring and in atmosphere. The *cadre* first adopted was that of domestic life portrayed in the collective volumes of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, but in his second literary period the expanding conception of the *cadres* included the wider space of the provinces and the capital. The novelist creates in a medium of both space and time—i.e., he depicts youth in the first and old age in the last subdivision; furthermore, the looseness with which he interprets his term may connote not only place and age but also social level or profession. The term

³⁷¹ *OD.*, III, 389. Balzac's italics. Cf. *Avant-propos*, p. xxvi.

³⁷² *Pensées, sujets, fragmens*, éd. Crépet, p. 99.

³⁷³ *OD.*, III, 388.

"cadre," therefore, is not specific; this lack of definiteness constitutes a weakness and points to a genuine deficiency in his system of classification; it gave ground for an attack from a now long-forgotten critic, Chaudes-Aigues,³⁷⁴ who objected to the reclassifications of stories. Apparently, it did not spoil the effectiveness of the *Comédie humaine*; nor did it lessen Balzac's talent. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the six sets of Scenes are not a fully organized analysis of society and are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. It is obvious, as Jared Wenger³⁷⁵ says, that the provincial background, for example, is not entirely restricted to the stories grouped in the "Scènes de la vie de province." On the other hand, had the author been able to carry out his analysis of society on the model of a strictly scientific classification, his distribution of novels might have been static, but there would have still remained the query as to whether it was truly artistic. Admitting that his distinctions between the *scènes* are not clear cut, each scene has, nevertheless, its *raison d'être* in that it clarifies Balzac's world and correlates his characters as they come and go from one setting to another.

Because of the mass of material required in portraying all aspects of life and because of the multiplicity of facts and the impetuosity of movement, the history of the "mœurs modernes mise en action" must, of necessity, be presented in order and unity. These effects Balzac achieves by closely interrelated divisions and subdivisions. Just as one character may evoke another, so one *cadre*, or subdivision, may lead to the next; for instance, the "Scènes de la vie de province" is a pendant to the "Scènes de la vie privée," and in turn is a contrast to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," to which the "Scènes de la vie politique" and the "Scènes de la vie militaire" serve as a complement; with all of these are contrasted, in a general way, the "Scènes de la vie de campagne."

This consecutive progression from the first to the last category is attained by the final story, designed in each subdivision to serve as a transition to the next. For example, *La Femme de trente ans*,³⁷⁶ the closing story of the "Scènes de la vie privée," links with the "Scènes de la vie de province," in which *Illusions perdues* leads up to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," which in turn is tied with the "Scènes de la vie politique" by

³⁷⁴ "Ecrivains contemporains: III, M. de Balzac, *Une Fille d'Ève*," *Revue de Paris*, new ser., XI (1839), 20-38.

³⁷⁵ *The Province and the Provinces in the Work of Honoré de Balzac*.

³⁷⁶ *OD.*, III, 384, 568.

L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine. Balzac has made his world the more real to his reader by the continuity of his characters now playing major roles in one subdivision, then reappearing in another in minor parts. Recognition is noted by Aristotle as one of the deeply seated, almost instinctive pleasures of man. In the world of Balzac it exercises this function and produces an illusion of reality. These particular figures are always vigorously active, always striving to reach higher levels of society, as in the case of Rubempré or Rastignac.

Despite the close weaving of the subdivisions, each has its intrinsic theme, variously presented in different novels. Throughout the six subdivisions the complex and diversified "machine sociale" of French society of the nineteenth century is dominant. Obviously, the names of some of these subdivisions have had their origin in titles previously used by Balzac for collective volumes, as in the case of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, which had two editions, or in the *Scènes de la vie politique* and in the *Scènes de la vie militaire*—which, however, were at first announced only as titles to be used for volumes. The importance of the early collective volumes and the projected titles is great, since upon these bases the author has gradually built up the *Etudes de mœurs*.³⁷⁷ The growth of single parts and their later fusion into one corpus, the *Comédie humaine*, proves the evolutionary nature of the total scheme.

Although the *Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle*,³⁷⁸ bought by Mme Veuve Charles-Béchet between October 9 and 13, 1833, were built essentially upon previously published works, we still have to deal with two kinds of material: on the one hand, old stories revised, enlarged, and linked both by reappearing characters, some of whom are now renamed, and by cross-references which had the ostensible purpose of fitting the novels into the growing plan; on the other hand, new novels composed for the scheme and designed to suit a definite category. The two types of material, old and new, are harmoniously integrated and established in the appropriate *Etude*, *Scène*, and group, such as *Les Célibataires*, *Les Parisiens en province*, and *Les Rivalités*. This expansion of the scheme is evinced by the variations in texts between the first and the final form of many novels.³⁷⁹ Our

³⁷⁷ A similar situation, except for the absence of subdivisions, exists in the case of the *Etudes philosophiques*.

³⁷⁸ In 12 vols. (3d ed. of the "Scènes de la vie privée," 4 vols.; 1st ed. of the "Scènes de la vie de province," 4 vols.; 1st ed. of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," 4 vols.), published by Mme Charles-Béchet and later by Werdet, 1834-37.

³⁷⁹ This type of revision is established by several variation studies done in connection with the Balzac Project.

next necessary step is to examine the first subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*, the "Scènes de la vie privée," third edition.

In the Preface to the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*, Balzac had stated, as noted in Section III, the general theme of those collective volumes. But when, in 1833, he transferred the volume title to designate the first subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*, he widened the scope of his program. This extension was explained in the Davin-Balzac introductions, and later, in 1839, by the author himself in his Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*. The "Scènes de la vie privée" portray "une face de la vie individuelle"—the periods of childhood and of adolescence, when sentiments are unselfish and generous, when hopes are naïve and run high. No violence is permitted here; only noble sentiments are depicted. Davin-Balzac explains: "Cette première vue de la destinée humaine était sans encadrement possible. Aussi l'auteur s'est-il complaisamment promené partout: ici, dans le fond d'une campagne; là, en province; plus loin, dans Paris." Here is obviously stressed the concept of time—youth; for this reason a story in this subdivision may have the setting either in the capital or in the provinces—which proves that the subdivisions are not watertight compartments.

The contents of the third edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée," now to be discussed, differ somewhat from those of the first and second editions. In the way of new³⁸⁰ material we note (1) two additional episodes: "Souffrances inconnues" and "La Vallée du torrent" in *Même Histoire*; and (2) two fresh stories: *La Fleur-des-pois* (*Le Contrat de mariage*) and *La Recherche de l'absolu*.

Balzac finished *La Fleur-des-pois*³⁸¹ at the home of Mme de Berny in October, 1835.³⁸² The tale was written for the "Scènes de la vie privée," in which it has remained permanently since it forms an integral part of the subdivision. In his correspondence he spoke of the story as "une grande Scène de la vie privée."³⁸³

Paul de Manerville, nicknamed "La Fleur-des-pois"—young, naïve, kind—was in love with Natalie Evangélista, the daughter of an ambitious and spendthrift mother, who arranged Natalie's marriage with Paul.

³⁸⁰ See Sec. III for analyses of the first two editions of the *Scènes de la vie privée*. New stories only will be discussed in this section.

³⁸¹ This story first appeared in the subdivision under consideration. In 1839, it was published in the Charpentier ed. of these Scenes; in 1842 it entered *Fur.*, Vol. III; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. VII.

³⁸² *LF.*, p. 151.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Later she succeeded in spending Paul's fortune, and finally ruined his good name by spreading rumors of disgraceful action on his part. Trustful and ignorant alike of her intrigues and of his wife's infidelity, Paul went to India to seek another fortune. A letter from his friend, Henri de Marsay, disclosed the facts concerning Paul's wife and her scheming, unscrupulous mother. In this tale Balzac did more than simply portray domestic infelicity. He wrote a *roman social*, in which he emphasized the great importance of the marriage contract in regard to property; he stressed also the professional type, the "espèce sociale," of the notary. He characterized sympathetically the old family lawyer, Mathias, in contest with the young and tricky solicitor, Solonet, each representing one of the contracting parties. Balzac says: "Ces *Condottieri* matrimoniaux, qui s'allaient battre pour leurs clients, et dont les forces personnelles devenaient si décisives en cette solennelle rencontre, les deux notaires représentaient les anciennes et les nouvelles mœurs, l'ancien et le nouveau notariat."³⁸⁴ The scene between the two lawyers just before signing the marriage contract is subtly contrasted with that between the people most vitally concerned in the matter. Balzac is direct, simple, powerful: "Il se passa donc une double scène. Au coin de la cheminée du grand salon, une scène d'amour où la vie apparaissait riante et joyeuse. Dans l'autre pièce, une scène grave et sombre où l'intérêt mis à nu, jouait par avance le rôle qu'il joue sous les apparences fleuries de la vie."³⁸⁵ This is the pivotal scene in the story, the "bataille d'hommes d'affaires." That the social significance of the "convenances pécuniaires" becomes uppermost in the author's mind is manifested by his change of title, in 1842, to *Le Contrat de mariage*. Paul's aunt voices the universal French idea concerning marriage: "Le contrat, mon enfant, le contrat est le plus saint des devoirs!" The struggle of interests and the emphasis on the marriage document would seem to group the novel among the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." Nevertheless, Balzac placed *Le Contrat de mariage* (with other legal stories which will be discussed later) in the "Scènes de la vie privée"; probably the family considerations, the heritage of the young people, were foremost in the author's mind. This is a story not only of French marriage customs and laws but also of conjugal unhappiness. The novelist's comment within the narrative brings *Le Contrat de mariage* in line with other tales classified in the same division. He says: "Les événemens et les idées qui ame-

³⁸⁴ "Scènes de la vie privée" (3d ed., 1835), II, 81.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

nèrent le mariage de Paul avec mademoiselle Evangélista sont la préface de l'œuvre, uniquement destiné à retracer la grande comédie qui précède toute la vie conjugale."³⁸⁶

The inception of *La Recherche de l'absolu*³⁸⁷ can be traced to June 10, 1832,³⁸⁸ when Balzac became interested in the life and work of Bernard Palissy, whom he thought to be an alchemist and whom he intended to make the hero of a projected novel, *Les Souffrances de l'inventeur*.³⁸⁹ This title appears also in the author's notebook,³⁹⁰ with a name—M. Claës—which indicates that Bernard Palissy was the prototype of Balthazar Claës, the hero of our novel.³⁹¹ J. Merlant³⁹² suggests that the theme of *Les Amours d'une laide*, a story projected but never finished,³⁹³ was also incorporated in *La Recherche de l'absolu*.

A recent work³⁹⁴ attributes the temporary placement of *La Recherche* entirely to Mme Béchet's urgent demand for an additional novel to complete the third edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée." This tentative classification shows, however, that at first Balzac did not stress Balthazar's gradual detachment from life and his increasing absorption in science, but rather his devotion to his wife and family. One could argue that the story is a study of a Flemish home and of conjugal happiness; this view is supported by the original chapter headings, now omitted. Chap-

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³⁸⁷ This novel first appeared in the subdivision under consideration; next it was published by Charpentier in the 4th ed. of the same *Scènes*, Vol. I (1839). In 1845 it appeared in the *Etudes philosophiques*, éd. Furne, Vol. XIV. Georges Vicaire lists a Figaro ed. (1838) of the novel (see *Manuel de l'amateur de livres du XIX^e siècle, 1801-1893*, Vol. I, col. 197). This edition is not mentioned in Lov., *Hist.*

³⁸⁸ *LF.*, p. 75.

³⁸⁹ *LEt.*, I, 52. The story was never written, but the title was used for Part III of *Illusions perdues* (1843).

³⁹⁰ Ed. Crépet, p. 132.

³⁹¹ See M. Georges Thouvenin, "La Genèse d'un roman de Balzac, *La Recherche de l'absolu*," *RHL*, XVIII (1911), 865-84. He maintains that M. Hoëne de Wronski, a Pole, was an influence in Balzac's conception of Claës. Cf. *LEt.*, I, 168-69. Wronski created, in 1819, a stir with his search for the Absolute and exercised a great influence on the minds of his students. However, Balzac's interest in alchemy is shown in *La Confiance des Ruggieri* (1836) rather than in *La Recherche de l'absolu*.

³⁹² *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

³⁹³ *LF.*, p. 109.

³⁹⁴ A. J. Williamson, "*La Recherche de l'absolu*. The Determination of Balzac's Method of Composition and Revision" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1938).

ter i, "La Maison Claës," with emphasis on "maison," is, in a way, a symbol of the family traditions; in fact, the presentation of the house of Claës has a sociohistorical value in depicting several generations of a whole clan.³⁹⁵ Chapter ii, "Histoire d'un ménage flamand," enhances the "vie domestique" of the young couple, with a gradual building-up of the husband's interest in and passion for Lavoisier's discoveries. Finally, says Balzac, this interest became "une maladie morale"; and Mme Claës, realizing that she had a rival in science, felt that she and the children were victims of Balthazar's monomania. Chapters iii-vii are a study of Balthazar as the martyr of his *idée fixe*, of his mental and physical degradation and its effects upon his family. The fact that in 1845 the author withdrew the novel from the "Scènes de la vie privée" and placed it permanently in the *Etudes philosophiques* shows that he considered the development essentially psychological. In reality it is less a "tableau de mœurs" than a study of exaggerated thought,³⁹⁶ which becomes a blind passion and ravages the mind of Claës to the extent of making him a maniac. On October 11, 1846, Balzac justifies to Hippolyte Castille his final classification: "... le héros de *la Recherche de l'absolu* représente les efforts de la chimie moderne, ... et tout personnage typique devient colossal par ce seul fait. C'est, d'ailleurs, une œuvre placée à son lieu dans les *Etudes philosophiques*, où il n'y a que des symboles."³⁹⁷ One of those symbols is certainly the smoke rising from the chimney of the laboratory, watched with despair by the dying wife. Balzac says: "Elle voyait s'enfuir en fumée la fortune de ses enfants; mais elle sauvait la vie de leur père."³⁹⁸ The central idea of the *Etudes philosophiques*, said Davin, is "la Pensée tue"; that is, when one thought possesses a man to the exclusion of all others, he becomes the martyr of his own ideal, and death is the only solution. The same intensity of conception is portrayed in *La Recherche de l'absolu* as in *La Peau de chagrin* and *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*; logically, therefore, the novel under consideration should be included in the same division. That the story was closely connected in Balzac's mind with *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* is indicated by his notations in the corrected Furne edition of the *Comédie humaine*: "*La Recherche de l'absolu* doit être placée immédiatement après *Melmoth réconcilié* et le *Chef-d'œuvre in-*

³⁹⁵ Dargan, "Studies in Balzac, II," *MP*, XVI (1918), 366.

³⁹⁶ See above, pp. 38, 41.

³⁹⁷ *OD.*, III, 365. Italics ours.

³⁹⁸ *La Recherche de l'absolu* ("Scènes de la vie privée" [1834]), III, 165.

connu aller après *la Recherche de l'absolu*.”³⁹⁹ These lines are crossed out and on the back of the flyleaf of the same volume is written, “Retrancher de ce volume *La Recherche de l'absolu*,” meaning simply that it was to be placed just before *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* in another volume of the *Etudes philosophiques*, as it eventually was.

This closes our discussion of the new material in the first subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*.

The first edition of the second subdivision, the “Scènes de la vie de province,” made its initial appearance in 1833. In the Davin-Balzac introductions were given the author's intentions for the subdivision. They were (1) to depict the mature period of life, as contrasted with that of youth; (2) to paint love motivated by self-interest and material advantage; (3) to portray selfish calculations and egotistical passions set against the narrow background of provincial life, in which setting he aimed to disclose “les tracasseries mesquines dont la périodicité concentre un intérêt poignant sur le moindre détail d'existence.”

Balzac chose the provinces as a setting, Davin continues, because it is the most harmonious and the richest in effects of chiaroscuro; Balzac himself gave further reasons for his portrayal of provincial life as a whole in the Preface to *Eugénie Grandet*, where he added that there is still poetry in the provincial atmosphere, still interest in thought rather than in action, still original characters to be found, and that life, although monotonous, is rich in detail.

These were ostensibly Balzac's reasons and intentions, artistic and psychological, for the stories to be grouped in the “Scènes de la vie de province”; but both reasons and intentions reveal an ultimate aim, and here we concur with Jared Wenger,⁴⁰⁰ to contrast life in the provinces generally with that of the capital and to make the provinces subservient to Paris.

It should be noted that the “Scènes de la vie de province” was never used as a collective title—that is, on the same basis as the *Scènes de la vie privée*. The name was first mentioned to Mme Hanska in a letter dated August 19, 1833. From that time Balzac continuously discussed the stories which he classified in this subdivision.⁴⁰¹ This first edition was

³⁹⁹ Lov. Coll., A 30. See also *Etudes philosophiques* (*Comédie humaine*, éd. Furne), XIV, 283.

⁴⁰⁰ *Op. cit.*

⁴⁰¹ Vols. I and II were published by Mme Béchét, December, 1833 (dated 1834). Vols. III and IV were published by Werdet, February, 1837.

composed of nine stories, of which three—*Le Message*, *Le Curé de Tours*, and *La Grande Bretèche* (the last episode of *Les Trois Vengeances*)—had been previously published in the *Scènes de la vie privée*⁴⁰² and six tales (plus the first two episodes of *Les Trois Vengeances* dealt with in part) were new material, which will be the subject of discussion.

Eugénie Grandet,⁴⁰³ announced to Mme Hanska on August 19, 1833, as "une *Scène de la Vie de province*, dans le genre des *Célibataires*,"⁴⁰⁴ was from the beginning placed in this subdivision; for here the author portrays life where, in the words of Davin, "les intérêts positifs contrecarrent à tout moment les passions violentes aussi bien que les espérances les plus naïves."⁴⁰⁵ This statement aptly characterizes the plot of the novel; on the one hand is Eugénie, naïve and trusting; on the other are her father, with his passion for gold, and the contesting parties of the Cruchotins and the Grassinistes. The novel is essentially a *roman social*. Its sociological aspect is revealed in Balzac's minute study of Grandet's occupation and fortune, his social status in the town and in the set in which he moves. The chapter titles of the story, later discarded, clarified its sociological nature—for instance, chapter i, "Physionomies bourgeoises." Both Bellesort⁴⁰⁶ and Maurice Serval⁴⁰⁷ suggest that the original conception of the character of Eugénie is to be found in Annette Gérard, the heroine of *Argow le pirate*.⁴⁰⁸ Eugénie gives money, as does Annette, but under different circumstances. The mainspring of the action is Félix Grandet's domineering, avaricious character, which blighted the destinies of both his wife and daughter. Since the initial pages of this novel convey so admirably the atmosphere of provincial life, it is well that *Eugénie Grandet* should open the "Scènes de la vie de province." Sainte-Beuve⁴⁰⁹ has commended Balzac's instinctive choice of locality for his stories. And it is with just pride that the novelist tells Mme Carraud that "*Eugénie Grandet* ... peint si bien la vie de province."⁴¹⁰ From the first pages the keynoting

⁴⁰² See above, pp. 55 ff.

⁴⁰³ The first chapter was published in *L'Europe littéraire*, September 19, 1833; the complete story appeared in Vol. I of the *Scènes de la vie de province*; in 1839 it appeared independently in 1 vol. in the Charpentier ed.; in 1843 it entered the Furne ed., *Comédie humaine*, Vol. I; and is now in *Con.*, Vol. VIII.

⁴⁰⁴ *LEt.*, I, 33.

⁴⁰⁵ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 47.

⁴⁰⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

⁴⁰⁷ *Autour d'Eugénie Grandet*, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰⁸ See above, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁰⁹ *Portraits contemporains*, II, 340.

⁴¹⁰ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 197.

and harmonizing, along lines of melancholy, are done with the utmost care in order to fit the tale of small-town life into the category. The street, the house, and the costume of the Saumur miser are in keeping with the narrow circle of his friends, the Des Grassins and the Cruchots; their tittle-tattle, scheming and greed for Eugénie's dowry, the intrigues and cupidities, especially evident in provincial life with its narrow horizons, are all depicted with a masterly hand.

La Femme abandonnée,⁴¹¹ after its temporary classification in the "Scènes de la vie de province," was permanently placed in 1842 in the "Scènes de la vie privée," of which it is an organic part. Although the setting is provincial life, the story is essentially that of a young man and of his sincere love for a woman, Mme de Beauséant, abandoned by her first lover, Ajudo-Pinto. In this tale Balzac demonstrates the havoc played by illicit love in the life of Gaston de Nueil and his consequent incapacity for the joys and duties of home life. After nine years of happiness with Mme de Beauséant, Gaston was overruled by his mother and tricked into a marriage of expediency. The author's interest is sharply focused upon the relation of Gaston and "la femme abandonnée." He has presented the soul analysis of one man and one woman, with the inevitable debacle of the man's marriage and his ensuing suicide.⁴¹²

*La Grenadière*⁴¹³ was originally called *Les Orphelins*. The latter title, frequently mentioned by Balzac in his correspondence, is not unsuited to the story, which deals with a mother and two fatherless boys. Here we have a really charming picture of child life in Touraine. However, this was not the motive for Balzac's brief artistic narrative. Its theme is indicated in his notebook: "Une mère mourante soignée par deux fils, elle n'est pas mariée. Son enterrement."⁴¹⁴ This is the gist of *La Grenadière*, except for the fact that Lady Brandon, the heroine, was married. It is essentially an account of a woman whose life was ruined by passion; remorseful for the errors of her past and unpardoned by her husband, she

⁴¹¹ This story first appeared September 16, 1832, in the *Revue de Paris*. In 1834 it was published in the "Scènes de la vie de province," Vol. II; and in 1839 in the 2d ed. of this collection by Charpentier, Vol. I. In 1842 it entered Vol. II of the *Comédie humaine*, "Scènes de la vie privée." It is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

⁴¹² It is interesting to note the two allusions to this "femme abandonnée" of 1832 in *La Duchesse de Langeais*, written in 1833.

⁴¹³ This story was first published in the *Revue de Paris*, October, 1832; after its appearance in the 1st and 2d eds. of the "Scènes de la vie de province," it entered in 1842 the "Scènes de la vie privée," éd. Furne, Vol. II. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

⁴¹⁴ *Lov. Coll.*, A 181, fol. 18.

retired to Touraine with her children. Weakened by sorrow and anxiety, she soon died. This melancholy tale of private life blighted by illicit love was also temporarily placed in the subdivision under consideration, where it served as a "filler" to supply the required volume pages. In 1842 the story was permanently classed, together with *La Femme abandonnée*, in the "Scènes de la vie privée," to which they both rightfully belong.

*L'Illustre Gaudissart*⁴¹⁵ is a short story written in the broadly jesting spirit which Balzac could adopt upon occasion. It is an amusing episode, almost a caricature, of Gaudissart, nicknamed "L'Illustre," a loquacious, self-confident traveling agent, who is outwitted by a Tourangeau inn-keeper. Gaudissart, unabashed by his failure, returns to Paris to relate the incident to his own advantage. The satire of this sketch is pointed by the author's statement to Mme Hanska in a letter of July 15, 1834, that the publisher, the "illustre Werdet," resembles a little the "illustre Gaudissart."⁴¹⁶

The commercial traveler, says Davin, is essentially a creation of modern society. Since Balzac purposed to present all types and all professions, Gaudissart has his place in the picture, per se; he also serves as a link between the capital and the provinces. This doubtless was the novelist's idea when, in 1843, he coupled this sketch with *La Muse du département* under a general title, *Les Parisiens en province*, to establish a dual connection between the two subdivisions and to show the continual trekking of people from the provinces to the capital and thence to the provinces again.

Balzac's lengthy Preface to the tale is a disquisition on high-powered salesmanship as developed in Paris and practiced on the provincials. With his increasing sociological interest he discussed the commercial agent as "une espèce"; the scene of Gaudissart's activities as he reappears is varied; in this sketch he is limited to the sphere of the small town, a circumstance which decides its permanent classification in the "Scènes de la vie de province."

Volume III of the "Scènes de la vie de province," Werdet edition, contained *Les Trois Vengeances* (*La Grande Bretèche*)⁴¹⁷ and *La Vieille Fille*.

⁴¹⁵ After this sketch appeared in the 1st ed. of the "Scènes de la vie de province," it was published in the 2d ed. by Charpentier in 1839. It entered in 1843 the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. VI, and is now in *Con.*, Vol. X.

⁴¹⁶ *LEt.*, I, 173.

⁴¹⁷ This story (the third episode of revenge) has been partly dealt with above, pp. 53, 55-58.

The former consists of three tales of revenge. The gist of the first, "Histoire du chevalier de Beauvoir," told by M. Gravier, a guest of Mme d'Espard, is as follows: When Napoleon was first consul, the Chevalier, a political prisoner, had the imprudence to fall in love with the wife of the commandant of the garrison; immediately he was locked in a dungeon. The husband contrived a scheme for vengeance which would inevitably result in the prisoner's death by his falling into an abyss. The Chevalier, however, discovered the precipice in time, succeeded in killing his jailer, and safely made his escape.

The second vengeance episode, "Le Grand d'Espagne," laid in the Restoration period, is far more tragic. It is told by Lousteau, who, on his way to Spain in 1823-24, attended a ball in Tours, where he joined a group of story-tellers. Among these was an old man who related a tale supposedly heard in Madrid. It was an account of unfaithfulness, jealousy, and bloody revenge told with the usual Balzacian verve and emphasized by the presence in the *salon* of the characters involved. These episodes with their typically provincial setting of the *salon* remained in the "Scènes de la vie de province," but only as fitting parts of *La Muse du département*.⁴¹⁸

In *La Vieille Fille*,⁴¹⁹ Rose Cormon, the wealthy heiress of Alençon, is the very symbol of provincial life; says Balzac: "... elle concordait à l'esprit général et aux mœurs des habitants qui l'aimaient comme le plus pur symbole de leur vie, car elle s'était encroûtée dans les habitudes de la province, elle n'en était jamais sortie, elle en avait les préjugés, elle en épousait les intérêts, elle l'adorait."⁴²⁰ She is the heroine of this patently provincial story, which the author classified from the start in the "Scènes de la vie de province." In this story, as in *Eugénie Grandet*, of the same subdivision, the plot hinges on the marriage of an heiress whose fortune was frankly coveted by the Chevalier de Valois, the gallant royalist and Voltairian, and by the energetic bourgeois Du Bousquier, a liberal and republican. The third pretender, Athanase Granson, nineteen years her junior, a talented and bashful youth, really loved Mlle Cormon without mercenary aim. "La province," says Balzac, "calcule et arrange le mariage," while Eugénie Grandet, or Rose Cormon, or Athanase—each a sin-

⁴¹⁸ See below, p. 143.

⁴¹⁹ This novelette first appeared in *La Presse*, October 23–November 4, 1836. In 1837 it was published in the subdivision under consideration; and in 1839 in the Charpentier ed. of the same scenes; in 1844 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. VII. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. X.

⁴²⁰ *La Vieille Fille*, "Scènes de la vie de province," III (1837), 211.

cere, idealistic soul—became the victim of such egotistical matrimonial calculations. Around the old maid the author arranged a tableau of provincial society. Her *salon* is the link between the two factions of the town: the old, impoverished aristocracy, of which the Chevalier is the symbol, and the rising antireligious bourgeoisie, with the ambitious Du Bousquier as its representative. Balzac shows himself a true historian of a passing aristocratic society and of a coming new type, somewhat commercial and vulgar.

In 1844, under a general but pertinent title, *Les Rivalités*, the author grouped *La Vieille Fille* with *Le Cabinet des antiques*, in which the conflict of old and new social ideas in the sphere of marriage widened into the political domain. Anticipating a second edition of the *Comédie humaine*, Balzac made important revisions in Volume VII⁴²¹ of the first Furne edition. *La Vieille Fille*—still under the general title, *Les Rivalités*—was to be grouped with two projected stories, *L'Original* and *Les Héritiers Boirouge*; but inasmuch as these were never written and the second edition of the *Comédie humaine* was not published until after the death of its author, *La Vieille Fille* remained as the single story of the *Rivalités*,⁴²² since it had been separated from its sequel. A study of the variations of the novel⁴²³ shows that Balzac's prime interest in rehandling the story was of a sociological nature, as the general title indicates.

Balzac designed (1837) the last novel of the "Scènes de la vie de province," *Les Deux Poètes* (Part I of *Illusions perdues*),⁴²⁴ to serve as a transi-

⁴²¹ Lov. Coll., A 23.

⁴²² For *Le Cabinet des antiques*, see below, p. 144.

⁴²³ Rachel Wilson, "A Study of the Variations between the First and the Definitive Editions of Balzac's *La Vieille Fille*" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1925).

⁴²⁴ This novel comprises three parts: Part I, "Les Deux Poètes," first appeared in the subdivision under discussion. Part II, "Un Grand Homme de province à Paris," was first published by Souverain in 1839, in 2 vols. Two chapters of this part, "Comment se font les petits journaux" and "Le Souper," appeared on June 8, 1839, in *L'Estafette*. Part III, "Les Souffrances de l'inventeur," first appeared June 9-19, 1843, in *L'Etat*; it was also published, under the title "David Séchard, ou Les Souffrances de l'inventeur," in *Le Parisien d'Etat*, July 27-August 14, 1843. The same year these three parts, under the general title *Illusions perdues*, entered the *Comédie humaine*, éd. Furne, Vol. VIII; Parts I and II kept their individual titles, whereas Part III was given a new one, "Ève et David," which had also a separate publication in 1844, under the title "David Séchard," in 2 vols. *Illusions perdues* is now in *Con.*, Vols. XI-XII. Although Parts II and III belong to a later period, it is expedient here to discuss the classification of the

tion to the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*, the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." With this end in view he refers clearly in Parts I and III to the journeys of the hero to Paris, and at the end of Part II he anticipates the return to the province. It is here that Bérénice gives her ill-gotten money to Lucien that he may leave Paris. Balzac says: "... cet argent lui brûlait la main et il [Lucien] voulait le rendre; mais il fut forcé de le garder comme un dernier stigmaté de la vie parisienne."⁴²⁵ Part III closes with another forward look to Paris: "Quant à Lucien, son retour à Paris est du domaine des *Scènes de la vie parisienne*." It is in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* that Balzac concludes the career of his hero, Lucien, who weeps in his prison cell over his lost illusions.

In Parts I and III the novelist portrays life in the province and relates the touching story of David Séchard and his wife, Eva, the sister of Lucien. They accept the quiet, uneventful life of Angoulême, which the author contrasts with the feverish life of the capital—in fact, he claims that the general sense of *Illusions perdues* is "un plaidoyer pour la famille." The young printer, Séchard, and his wife stand out among the most sympathetic types that Balzac has created; their sacrifice and courage contrast impressively with the selfishness and moral weakness of Lucien. The author's personal recollections of the vicissitudes of a printer and a journalist have made his description of the French literary youth around 1822 keenly significant and, as he claimed, "d'une réalité désespérante."

For each part of this trilogy Balzac wrote a preface in which he clarifies his intentions regarding the ensuing novel and its classification. In the Preface to Part I, *Les Deux Poètes*, the author says: "Il ne s'agissait d'abord que d'une comparaison entre les mœurs de la province et les mœurs de la vie parisienne; ... mais, en peignant avec complaisance l'intérieur d'un ménage et les révolutions d'une pauvre imprimerie de province ... le champ [the scope] s'est agrandi malgré l'auteur."⁴²⁶ In portraying Lucien, the personification of ambition, the author thought of the "grande plaie de ce siècle, au journalisme, qui dévore tant d'existences, tant de belles pensées, et qui produit d'épouvantables réactions dans les modestes régions de la vie de province."⁴²⁷ Thus the tableau of individual

complete novel. For a full treatment of the novel, see Margaret Anderson, "The Background of Balzac's *Illusions perdues* and Variations in the Principal Editions" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1930).

⁴²⁵ *Con.*, XII, 361.

⁴²⁶ *OD.*, III, 390.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

life is extended to include a whole section of contemporary society—literary men, journalists, and their “mœurs intimes.”

Most changes and variations⁴²⁸ in this novel are of a sociological nature, centered in the social groups of literary men, journalists, printers, as well as of usurers, inventors, and provincials in Paris—men with whom Balzac was himself associated. Moreover, the changes demonstrate his determination to solidify and unify the novel within its *cadre* and within the whole *Comédie humaine*. The theme of the novel and its treatment make it, as a whole, a part of the “Scènes de la vie de province,” in which it was classified from the beginning. On the basis of Part II, *Un Grand Homme de province à Paris*, the story might have been in keeping with the “Scènes de la vie parisienne”; however, since the hero of the trilogy is a provincial and Parts I and III are laid in Angoulême, the whole is more appropriately placed at the close of the “Scènes de la vie de province,” where it leads directly to the next subdivision and our present topic.

The first edition of the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs* was designated “Scènes de la vie parisienne,”⁴²⁹ a general title not used before. Balzac first mentioned it in a letter to Mme Hanska dated May 29–June 1, 1833, when he told her of the contract signed for the publication of these Scenes. On August 19 he informed her that they would appear during the winter. They were published between March, 1834, and November, 1835.

With the publication of the Parisian series Balzac had reached, with an ever widening scope, the mid-point of his total scheme. Of the nine stories included in the first edition of the “Scènes de la vie parisienne,” six⁴³⁰ had appeared in earlier collections. The author temporarily⁴³¹ transferred this old material to the new subdivision in order to fill the number of pages required in these volumes. In the following passage, a typical one, he accounts for the misplacement of some novels prior to their final classification:

Les fragments de l'œuvre entreprise par l'auteur subissent ... les lois capricieuses du goût et de la convenance des marchands. Tel journal a demandé un morceau qui ne soit trop long, ni trop court, qui puisse entrer dans tant de colonnes et de tel prix. ... On les [stories] expose dans les deux premiers volumes

⁴²⁸ See Anderson, *op. cit.*

⁴²⁹ In 4 vols., published by Mme Béchét; Vol. I appeared in November, 1835; Vols. II and III, March 15, 1834; Vol. IV, May, 1835.

⁴³⁰ Discussed above, pp. 31, 33, 41, 47, 58, 73.

⁴³¹ Except for one story, *Sarrasine*, which remained permanently in this subdivision.

venus. Il faut subir les exigences de la librairie ... elle veut deux volumes ni plus ni moins, ou un bout de conte pour mettre à ceci plus d'ampleur. Elle a ses habitudes de format, elle tient à ses marges.⁴³²

In the second edition⁴³³ of this series the distribution of stories per volume was different from the first; and one tale, *L'Interdiction*, was added. Otherwise, there were no changes.

In his Preface⁴³⁴ to the first edition Balzac harks back to *Illusions perdues*, as the link connecting the two subdivisions and showing "la province venant chercher Paris par un calcul d'amour-propre et de vanité." The intermingling of provincial and Parisian life is continuous, he asserts; the portrayal in the Parisian series is on a broader scope and done, he claims, with a more "sober and somber brush." Here the stories depict the *arriviste* on a wider and more metropolitan scale, more advanced and yet more materialistic and pessimistic, with emphasis on the "machine sociale." According to the author, Paris is the only possible setting for the portrayal of the clash of selfish interests, of the life in which passion, vices, abuses, and all extremes dissolve social principles. It is in Paris, Davin-Balzac had earlier said, that "tout se subtilise, s'analyse, se vend et s'achète," that "l'humanité n'a plus que deux formes, le trompeur et le trompé ... tout s'exploite, se débite."⁴³⁵ The stories of this subdivision will presently be analyzed in the light of these intentions.

The third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs* contained only three new titles: *Les Marana*, *Histoire des Treize*, and *La Comtesse à deux maris*. Balzac stated the theme of *Les Marana*:⁴³⁶ "Une femme tuant son mari qui a fait un crime ignoble et qui, en mourant sur l'échafaud, déshonorerait ses enfants."⁴³⁷ In this statement he strikes the keynote, family honor. This and two other stories, *El Verdugo* and *L'Enfant maudit*, also

⁴³² Preface to *La Femme supérieure*, *La Maison Nucingen*, and *La Torpille*, OD., III, 507-8.

⁴³³ In 2 vols., published by Charpentier, 1839.

⁴³⁴ OD., III, 391.

⁴³⁵ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 47.

⁴³⁶ This novel first appeared in the *Revue de Paris*, December 15, 1832—January 15, 1833. After its first appearance in the 1st ed. of the subdivision under consideration it was published, together with *Ferragus*, by the Bureau du *Figaro*, in 1838; this edition is not listed in Lov., *Hist.* See A. G. Canfield, *MLN*, XLVIII (1933), 497-501. In 1846 the story appeared in the *Etudes philosophiques*, *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XV. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXIX.

⁴³⁷ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 18.

embodying the presentation of an abstract idea, were ultimately and logically classified in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

Juana de Mancini, the heroine of the story, motivated by a high sense of honor, killed her husband rather than suffer the shame of his execution to fall upon her children. This dramatic tale, written with great economy in characters and exposition, places its emphasis on the conception and development of two characters only. One, Diard, a hero on the battlefield, was really a moral coward incapable of self-sacrifice. Balzac, believing in social castes, carefully prepared the denouement by keynoting Diard's character along lines of a certain weakness leading to infamy. His courage failed when his wife expected him to be a man of moral stamina. Diard was the victim of an inferiority complex which he could not overcome and was therefore incapable of facing "le monde" on equal terms. He gradually slipped back into his former "vie infernale" and eventually wrought his own destruction. In the author's intentions Diard belongs, along with Montefiore, whom he stabbed and robbed, to those "grands hommes manqués, que la société marque d'avance au fer chaud, en les appelant des *mauvais sujets*."⁴³⁸ As a contrast, Balzac explains Juana, the second character, in a careful *dossier*.⁴³⁹ Her inherited pride, sense of honor, and social background justify her action. It is clear that *Les Marana* is not primarily an *étude de mœurs*, since it derives rather from a contemplation of ideas of honor and moral courage, of infamy and cowardice. Because of these features, the tale forms an integral part of the *Etudes philosophiques*, in which it remained after 1846.

Balzac gave the general title *Histoire des Treize*⁴⁴⁰ to three stories concerning a secret gang known as the "Thirteen," adventurers and "grands seigneurs," who for their own benefit and pleasure had sworn mutual protection. Ferragus, a convict and leader of the band, was the loving father,

⁴³⁸ *Les Marana, Con.*, XXIX, 60.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁴⁰ Part I, "Ferragus chef des dévorants," first appeared in the *Revue de Paris*, March and April, 1833. In 1838 it was published, together with *Les Marana*, in 1 vol. in octavo. See above, n. 436. Of Part II, "La Duchesse de Langeais," chap. i appeared in *L'Echo de la jeune France*, March, 1833. Of Part III, "La Fille aux yeux d'or," one fragment, "Le Petit Mercier," appeared in *La Caricature*, December 16, 1830; another, "Les Jeunes Gens de Paris," was published in Vol. IV of the *Nouveau Tableau de Paris au XIX^e siècle* (a collective work) (1834-35). These three parts, under the general title *Histoire des Treize*, first appeared together in the subdivision under consideration; in 1839 under the same general title the first two parts only were published by Charpentier in 1 vol. In 1843 the novel entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. IX. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XIII.

almost à la Goriot, of Marie, happily married to a respectable bourgeois, M. Jules Desmarets, who was ignorant of his wife's antecedents. Auguste de Maulincour, a sentimental and bored aristocrat, infatuated with Marie, unjustly told Desmarets that she was unfaithful. By this act Auguste brought death upon himself at the hands of the powerful Ferragus and, indirectly, caused that of the innocent young wife.

The secret power of the "Thirteen" is again presented in a second tale, which recalls Balzac's own experiences as a rejected lover. Of this tale Bellessort says: "... on y trouve l'analyse la plus dramatique de la coquetterie féminine dans tout ce qu'elle a d'instinctif et de calculé, d'intelligent et de félin."⁴⁴¹ Briefly, it is the story of Armand de Montriveau, one of the "Thirteen," passionately in love with the Duchesse de Langeais, a modern Célimène. With the help of his associates Armand kidnapped her; then, with a violent revulsion of feeling, threatened to brand her; and finally with scorn freed her. Later she entered a convent off the Spanish coast as a nun. Here, after five years of search, the repentant and still devoted Armand found her. Again with the aid of the "Thirteen," he succeeded in penetrating the convent, but only to carry off the body of the duchess—death had defeated the powerful band.

In the last story Balzac relates the third failure of the secret gang, confronted now with perverted passion and ultimate death. Since his plan obliged him to be universal, he maintained that his picture of modern Sodom would be incomplete without this episode, of which he spoke to Mme Hanska as "cette bêtise de *la Fille aux Yeux d'or*."⁴⁴²

These three plots are melodramatic; but the long disquisitions of the *Histoire des Treize* on life in the aristocratic *faubourg* of Saint-Germain under the Restoration, and the great variety of social types, such as the magistrate, the speculator, the banker, the lawyer, the petty merchant, the workingman—all seeking, says Balzac, money and pleasure—make this novel the broadest social picture which the author had yet written about Paris. It is a study par excellence of Parisian life and forms an integral part of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," in which it was permanently classified and appropriately placed as the opening scene of the subdivision in the first Furne edition of the *Comédie humaine*.

*Le Colonel Chabert*⁴⁴³ is the pathetic tale of an officer of the *Légion d'hon-*

⁴⁴¹ Bellessort, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

⁴⁴² *LEt.*, I, 240.

⁴⁴³ This story first appeared in serial form in *L'Artiste*, February–March, 1832; and the same year in Vol. I of the *Salmigondis*, under the title *Le Comte Chabert*; in 1835 it

neur, wounded at Eylau and reported dead. Reviving, he crawled out from under the heap of bodies. After a miserable life in Germany he returned to France, wishing to reinstate himself in his former social position. His wife, married again and enjoying her first husband's fortune, refused to recognize him. In his desperate struggle the poverty-stricken soldier interested the honest lawyer, Derville, who attempted to rehabilitate him. The revelation of his wife's wickedness was so revolting to the upright, stoic nature of Chabert that he gave up the fight when Derville had almost won his case for him. The hero of Napoleon's army later sank to the lowest depth of poverty in a public institution.

The shift in titles indicates Balzac's change in interest. At first it centered in the complicated legal procedure which led to a compromise; hence the original title, *La Transaction*. In the second title, *Le Comte Chabert*, the author turned the spotlight on the rehabilitation of the hero's social and military status. Next, he shifted the emphasis to the psychology of the main characters, especially to that of the wife, whose problem is indicated in the third title, *La Comtesse à deux maris*. Later, however, since the stoic colonel was, after all, the chief character, Balzac finally adopted the present title, *Le Colonel Chabert*. He wrote to Mme Hanska in regard to this story: "J'ai trouvé cela détestable, manquant de goût, de vérité."⁴⁴⁴ Hence the changes and corrections. Apparently, he was at last satisfied, for Davin-Balzac says: "Maintenant, grâce aux changements heureux que l'auteur vient de faire subir à *la Comtesse à deux maris* ... cette étude est une histoire irréprochable."⁴⁴⁵

The changes in title, as well as the textual insertions concerning the types of the law offices, indicate, first, Balzac's sociological preoccupation and, second, his desire to fit the story into the general scheme of the *Comédie humaine*. In the 1835 edition of the novel he added the Derville tirade, in which he summarized, along with other stories, *Le Père Goriot*. Furthermore, he developed the reappearing characters, whose relationships were further clarified in the next edition of 1844. On the flyleaf of the corrected Furne edition⁴⁴⁶ Balzac indicated *Le Colonel Chabert* as being a part of the "Scènes de la vie privée," to which the tale was conse-

was published in Vol. IV of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; it reappeared in the 2d ed. of the same series in 1839; it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. X, in 1844. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. VII.

⁴⁴⁴ *LEt.*, I, 243. Letter dated March, 1835.

⁴⁴⁵ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 63.

⁴⁴⁶ *Lov. Coll.*, A 17 and A 25.

quently shifted. This novel, together with a group of other legal stories, such as *Le Contrat de mariage*, *L'Interdiction*, and *Un Début dans la vie*, forms an essential part of the first subdivision of the "Etudes de mœurs." It is evident, nevertheless, that there was a doubt in Balzac's own mind as to the exact classification of these Scenes laid in Paris; each narrative deals with an individual private life; probably this consideration induced the author to place this group of stories in the "Scènes de la vie privée."

Since *L'Interdiction* is the only new story in the second edition of this category,⁴⁴⁷ it seems expedient to discuss it at this point. *L'Interdiction*,⁴⁴⁸ according to Balzac's notations on the corrected Furne edition of the *Comédie humaine*, is now classified in the "Scènes de la vie privée," to which it logically belongs. It had originally, in 1836, been placed inappropriately in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Werdet edition. In 1839 and again in 1844 it filled the required pages in the subdivision now under consideration. The final classification of *L'Interdiction* is explained by two parallel scenes: Judge Popinot's interviews, first, with the Marquise d'Espard, and then with her husband. In these scenes the author reveals and contrasts two lives. In the first, the marquise employs her coquetry and craftiness to seduce the honest and kindhearted Popinot in order to obtain from him a decree of restraint for her husband and thus secure control of the latter's fortune. In the second scene the judge visits the marquis and his sons. Here Balzac presents a quiet, peaceful home life devoted to the rearing of two boys and to assiduous work. During this visit the judge is convinced of Mme d'Espard's true motives in seeking to place a legal injunction upon her husband. The following words make the reader feel that Balzac primarily intended to portray private life: "Le marquis tendit sa main à Popinot, et Popinot y frappa doucement de la sienne en jetant à *ce grand homme de la vie privée* un regard plein d'harmonies pénétrantes."⁴⁴⁹ The outstanding figure in the story is Popinot, the philanthropist and honest man-of-law. This story completes the series

⁴⁴⁷ Ed. Charpentier, 2 vols., 1839.

⁴⁴⁸ This tale first appeared in the *Chronique de Paris*, January-February, 1836; the same year it was published in the Werdet ed. of the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vols. XXIV-XXV. After its appearance in the Charpentier ed. of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" it was placed in the Furne ed. of the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. X (1844). It is now in the "Scènes de la vie privée," *Comédie humaine*, éd. Conard, Vol. VII.

⁴⁴⁹ *Con.*, VII, 194. Italics ours. It is interesting to note that the above statement should appear in the original manuscript and remain unchanged subsequently. See photostat of the manuscript in the University of Chicago Libraries.

now included in the *Etudes de mœurs*. However, the publication of the *Etudes philosophiques*, later to become the second main division, had already been begun.

It has been shown that from the beginning of his constructive period there were in Balzac's mind parallel drives toward the *Etudes de mœurs* and the *Etudes philosophiques*. From 1833 to 1837 he was engaged in the publication of the first three subdivisions of the former and did but little on the latter. However, his plan to utilize earlier collections of the philosophical tales for the second main division of the future *Comédie humaine* is hinted in his "Note" (1835) to the fourth edition of *La Peau de chagrin*. He says: "Aujourd'hui l'œuvre entière prend le seul titre (*Etudes philosophiques*) que l'auteur avait voulu lui imposer dès l'origine."⁴⁵⁰ Balzac had expressed a similar intention in a letter to his publisher, dated November 13, 1833. For several years he had been promising Gosselin a novel, *Le Privilège*, never written. In this letter he offered him two new volumes of the *Contes philosophiques* in place of *Le Privilège*, but the publisher was unwilling to accept the substitute. Somewhat angered, the novelist wrote in reply: "Je crois, Monsieur, que vous ne compreniez pas toute l'importance de cet ouvrage [*Contes philosophiques*], comme publication. ... Si vous continuez à rejeter ce que je vous propose dans notre intérêt commun, je vois que l'entreprise des *R. et c. [phil.]*, sera soumise au même dédain que les *Etudes de mœurs*."⁴⁵¹

The altercation seems to have been a bad omen for the future *Etudes philosophiques*, eventually published by Edmond Werdet. This publication—in four series, or *livraisons*, of five volumes each—appeared between 1835 and 1840; the first series was on sale in January, 1835; the second in September, 1836; of these Werdet was the sole publisher. In October, 1836, however, he claimed bankruptcy;⁴⁵² consequently, the third series was published conjointly by Delloye and Lecou. Although this series was registered in the *Bibliographie de la France* on July 8, 1837, it did not appear until August 17.⁴⁵³ The fourth and last series, published by Hippolyte Souverain, appeared on June 4, 1840. This protracted publication, by three different firms as well as by different printers, is partly responsible for the very complicated numbering of those volumes which actually ap-

⁴⁵⁰ *OD.*, III, 407.

⁴⁵¹ *Lov. Coll.*, A 287, fol. 103. This letter has been published in the *Revue bleue*, 4th ser., XX (1903), 644.

⁴⁵² Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, pp. 393 ff.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

peared. Balzac repeatedly announced that the complete series would contain twenty-five or thirty volumes. The numeration and contents of volumes varied in each announcement in the Werdet catalogues, as well as on the cover pages of the *Etudes de mœurs*, then in course of publication. In the summer of 1834 Balzac printed two prospectuses, of which the *en-têtes* were identical; but again the contents of these volumes were shifted.⁴⁵⁴ Of the projected volumes of the *Etudes philosophiques*, only twenty appeared. The numbers of these were later arbitrarily changed to give the impression of a continuous series of twenty volumes.

In this second main division of Balzac's future *Comédie humaine* the questions of *mœurs* and *roman social* are not paramount; for up to 1833 at least half of his work belonged to the "philosophical" type of fiction in which he deals with mental and moral deviation and in which passions are treated as the driving forces of human life. Balzac's plans for the *Etudes philosophiques* are set forth in his correspondence, in his prefaces, and in the Davin-Balzac Introduction of 1834. Of this last the novelist wrote frankly to Mme Hanska in a letter dated December 22, 1834—January, 1835: "Vous devinerez facilement que l'*Introduction* m'a autant coûté qu'à ce M. Davin, car il a fallu le *serinetter* et le recorriger jusqu'à ce qu'il eût exprimé convenablement ma pensée."⁴⁵⁵ In the *Etudes philosophiques* the author sought to explain the hidden mechanism of human life. The characters are individualized types, yet symbols of abstract ideas—for example, Maître Cornélius, a symbol of avarice. The basic idea, says Davin-Balzac, is that "la pensée, augmentée de la force passagère que lui prête la passion, et telle que la société la fait, devient nécessairement pour l'homme un poison, un poignard."⁴⁵⁶ The novelist reiterates in 1839 ideas already expressed in 1831 concerning this group of tales which were to continue *La Peau de chagrin* by showing "le désordre que la pensée arrivée à tout son développement produit dans l'âme ... [and that] la fantaisie y [*Etudes philosophiques*] dominera d'une manière sensible."⁴⁵⁷ This type of fiction, then, springs from the treatment of abstract ideas and symbols.

It would seem that Balzac attempted to devise subdivisions for the *Etudes philosophiques*, as he had done for the *Etudes de mœurs*. A memorandum in his notebook listed titles of stories, now included in the *Etudes*

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

⁴⁵⁵ *LEt.*, I, 222. For Balzac's participation in the "Introduction" to the *Etudes de mœurs*, see below, p. 132.

⁴⁵⁶ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 201.

⁴⁵⁷ Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*, *OD.*, III, 528-29.

philosophiques, under the following proposed subdivisions: "la vie d'action," "la vie du cœur," and "la vie du cerveau"; these groupings, however, were never used. As in the case of the *Etudes de mœurs* series, the *Etudes philosophiques* were largely an extension of previously published collective volumes.⁴⁵⁸ Balzac was, in reality, doing double work: revising, enlarging, and fitting into his scheme previously written stories and at the same time creating new ones for the second division of the future *Comédie humaine*. Therefore, here also we deal with two kinds of material, old and new. Of the twenty-five stories in the twenty volumes, first issued under the general title *Etudes philosophiques*, eleven were new in the division; of these, two—*Adieu* and *L'Interdiction*—have been analyzed in other categories. Consequently, we shall discuss only nine new stories,⁴⁵⁹ in the chronological order of their appearance in the *livraisons*.

Although the order adopted in this study is chronological, it becomes, upon occasion, advisable to give precedence to logical sequence. Hence we shall now analyze a collective volume, *Le Livre mystique*,⁴⁶⁰ not originally published in the series under discussion; but since the title and contents of *Le Livre mystique* are suggestive of this category, it may be considered as one of its subdivisions. The three stories (*Louis Lambert*, *Séraphita*, *Les Proscrits*) in this volume are obviously mystical and philosophical and were ultimately classed in the proper division. In the Preface to the first edition of *Le Livre mystique* (1835) Balzac himself brings out the relation of this collective volume to the *Etudes philosophiques*, while defending the mystical and the idealistic views expressed in the stories. He says: "... ce livre est destiné à offrir l'expression nette de la pensée religieuse, jetée comme une âme en ce long ouvrage."⁴⁶¹ He continues his explanation by asserting that, since Louis Lambert and Séraphita are mystics, they must speak and act in character; they symbolize both human sentiment and systems: "Séraphita, blanche et pure expression du mysticisme ... connaît l'infini, les mesures du fini doivent alors lui paraître mesquines."⁴⁶²

Séraphita,⁴⁶³ the only new title in the *Livre mystique*, was, then, per-

⁴⁵⁸ See above, pp. 40, 70.

⁴⁵⁹ Of which four—*Séraphita*, *Melmoth réconcilié*, *Gambara*, and *Massimilla Doni*—had been published earlier in individual volumes but not yet in divisions.

⁴⁶⁰ 1st ed. (December, 1835); 2d ed. (February, 1836), in 2 vols., published by Werdet.

⁴⁶¹ *OD.*, III, 418.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 418-27.

⁴⁶³ The beginning of this story was published in the *Revue de Paris*, June-July, 1834. The complete tale appeared in the two editions of *Le Livre mystique* (1835 and 1836) and

manently classed in the *Etudes philosophiques* (1840 and subsequently) because of its purely mystical philosophy. For Balzac the character of Séraphita was the symbol of celestial perfection, and the novel was intended as a fitting conclusion for the category of the *Etudes philosophiques*. He wrote the story under the influence of the work of Swedenborg, whose mystical raptures are voiced by Séraphita-Séraphitüs, a creation of mixed nature—half-human, half-angelic. Taine states that in Séraphita “la destinée humaine est présentée comme une suite de vies ascendantes où l’âme, guidée d’abord par l’amour de soi, puis par l’amour des êtres et enfin par l’amour du ciel, traverse tour à tour le monde naturel, le monde spirituel et le monde divin.”⁴⁶⁴ Wilfrid personified self-love: Minna, womanly love; and Séraphita, love of God. Both Wilfrid and Minna symbolize the purification of human passion through divine aspiration and their desire to unite themselves with the Infinite. It is appropriate that the story should be aligned with *Louis Lambert*, also inspired by the Swedenborgian doctrine of faith. In *Séraphita*, in *Les Proscrits*, in *L’Enfant maudit*, and in *Jésus-Christ en Flandre* Balzac emphasized faith as a comforting factor in life and as a purifying element of the human spirit in its ascent toward the mystery of eternity. Having established the logical connection between *Le Livre mystique* and the *Etudes philosophiques*, we shall now continue our discussion of the first *livraison* of the latter.

Only one new story was added to the first *livraison*, *Un Drame au bord de la mer*.⁴⁶⁵ It continues the study of remorse which Balzac made earlier in *L’Auberge rouge*. In the *Drame au bord de la mer*, as in *El Verdugo* and in *Les Marana*, an exaggerated idea of family honor leads to murder. Logically, then, this story is classified with the other three in the *Etudes philosophiques* and later in the division of the same title. We have here a dramatic account of how a father, a Breton fisherman, preferred to see his dissipated son dead rather than imprisoned and publicly executed. He

was reprinted in 1840 by Souverain, under a new collective title, *Le Livre des douleurs*, in Vols. XXVIII and XXIX of the *Etudes philosophiques*. In 1842 it appeared, together with *Louis Lambert*, in 1 vol., published by Charpentier; in 1844 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVI, and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXXI.

⁴⁶⁴ *Nouveaux Essais de critique et d’histoire*, p. 92.

⁴⁶⁵ This story, with a new title, *La Justice paternelle*, reappeared in 1843, together with *La Muse du département*, *Rosalie* (Albert Savarus), and *Le Père Canet* (Facino Cane), under the general title *Les Mystères de province*, published by Souverain in 4 vols. Under its present title it entered the *Comédie humaine*, *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XV (1846). The story is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXIX.

says: "Je ne veux pas qu'un Cambremer soit fait mourir sur la place du Croisic."⁴⁶⁶ He threw his son from a cliff into the ocean; then, tortured by remorse, he became a hermit, lived on bread and water, and dwelt in the shadow of a cross on the scene of his crime.⁴⁶⁷

In the second *livraison* (September, 1836) we note only two new stories. *L'Interdiction*⁴⁶⁸ (already dealt with) and *Melmoth réconcilié*.⁴⁶⁹ The latter had its origin in *Le Centenaire* (*Le Sorcier* or *Les Deux Beringheld*) of 1822 but was more directly inspired, as Balzac stated in his "Note" to the first edition,⁴⁷⁰ by the *Melmoth* of the Rev. Charles R. Maturin.⁴⁷¹ In 1828 Balzac bought from the publisher, Hubert, a translation of the English story, by M. Jean Cohen.⁴⁷² The subject must have haunted the novelist's mind, for there is an allusion to it in the first edition of *La Peau de chagrin* (1831). In *Melmoth réconcilié* the author used the Faust theme. His Melmoth possessed magic powers but could neither overcome remorse nor satisfy his desire—to save his soul—unless he passed on his demoniac passion to another human being. The victim chosen was Castanier, a dishonest clerk in a banking-house, who, to escape the consequences of a theft, exchanged his soul for the fatal powers of Melmoth. After satisfying his passions, Castanier reached satiety, where his almost unlimited power became the source of his greatest wretchedness—he had sold his soul "au prix de son éternité bienheureuse."⁴⁷³ Driven by remorse and fear, he sought in turn to save his soul from the demon. He found a suitable subject, Claparon, at the Exchange, where, says Balzac, since 1815 the principle of honor had been replaced by that of greed. From Claparon this diabolical power passed in turn through many hands until it perished with a miserable clerk, who died without remorse and without repentance.

⁴⁶⁶ *Con.*, XXIX, 193.

⁴⁶⁷ It is noteworthy that this story, written in November, 1834, should contain two reappearing characters, Louis Lambert and Pauline de Villenoix.

⁴⁶⁸ See above, p. 109.

⁴⁶⁹ This story first appeared in Vol. VI of the *Livre des conteurs*, a collective work compiled by several authors and published by Lequien, June, 1835. The same year it was published in the *Etudes philosophiques*, Vol. XXII (changed to Vol. XIV in 1840), and not in Vol. V, as indicated in *Lov., Hist.*, p. 178. The error was not repeated, however, on p. 163. The story entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIV (1845), and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVII.

⁴⁷⁰ *OD.*, III, 417-18.

⁴⁷¹ Translated into French in 1821.

⁴⁷² For this information we are indebted to M. Marcel Bouteron.

⁴⁷³ *Con.*, XXVII, 355.

Balzac's purpose in this is precisely that developed elsewhere in the *Etudes philosophiques*—to show the destructive effect of an intensified *idée fixe* which, when it becomes passion, exalts and then annihilates man. It is self-evident that *Melmoth réconcilié* continues the idea of *La Peau de chagrin* and is a component part of the *Etudes philosophiques*, in which it was permanently classified—whether as a “set” or as a main division of the *Comédie humaine*.

Between March, 1835, and September, 1836, Balzac made four different announcements regarding the third *livraison*, but no others appeared until August 17, 1837, when *La Presse* advertised the sale of the volumes. Spoelberch de Lovenjoul⁴⁷⁴ explains this long silence by Werdet's pseudo-bankruptcy, of October, 1836. The volumes of this series had been handled by several firms; new publishers continued the publication, as indicated by their names on the inside title-pages of Volumes XII, XV, XVI, and XVII of this third *livraison*. These shifts reveal the harassing conditions under which the *Etudes philosophiques* were published and give evidence of a situation which partly explains the flagrant errors in content and pagination of these volumes.

The third *livraison* contained most of the new material in the series. There were nine stories, of which five were new; of these, *La Messe de l'athée*⁴⁷⁵ was at first placed temporarily in the division under consideration; then, in 1844, in the “Scènes de la vie parisienne.” In both cases the misplacement was due to the exigency of completing the *feuilles*, a matter always irritating to Balzac. But, on planning a second edition of the *Comédie humaine*, he indicated, in his own hand, on a leaf pasted in Volume I⁴⁷⁶ of the first Furne edition, that *La Messe de l'athée*, together with other stories⁴⁷⁷ of the “Scènes de la vie parisienne,” was to be permanently classified in the “Scènes de la vie privée.” Consequently, in the prospectus of 1846, to which the Conard edition conforms, these stories are listed in the designated subdivision. *La Messe de l'athée* is the story of Dr. Desplein, the inner meaning of whose life was inadvertently discovered by his disciple and friend, Bianchon. In a touching manner Balzac

⁴⁷⁴ See art. cit., in *RHL*, 1907, pp. 394-95, 426.

⁴⁷⁵ This story first appeared in *La Chronique de Paris*, January 3, 1836. After its publication in the *Etudes philosophiques* it entered, in 1844, the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. X (“Scènes de la vie parisienne,” Vol. II). It is now in *Con.*, Vol. VII (“Scènes de la vie privée”).

⁴⁷⁶ Lov. Coll., A 17.

⁴⁷⁷ *Le Père Goriot*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *Pierre Grassou*, and *L'Interdiction*.

tells how the profound gratitude of the scientific and skeptical Desplein disrupted his own principles. For twenty years he had been paying for annual Masses which he attended in respectful memory of the simple faith of a water-carrier, a humble Auvergnat, who had sacrificed his life-saving and ambition to aid the youth in attaining his own aim to become a famous physician. It is a charming tale of brotherly love, which, according to Balzac, belongs and was finally classified in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne."

The next new story in Volume XII of the third *livraison* is *Facino Cane*.⁴⁷⁸ Although essentially an *étude de mœurs*, it served first as a "filler" for this volume. For the same purpose, but under the title *Le Père Cane*, Balzac later grouped it with other stories under the collective title *Les Mystères de province*. Ultimately, in 1844, he classified this short sketch in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," in which the typical Parisian setting, the intensity of passions, and the resultant murder, as in the case of *Sarrasine* and of *La Fille aux yeux d'or*, definitely belong. In these stories the author ferrets out the hidden secrets of human lives which have been distorted by some abnormal bent of mind or by an unfavorable milieu. *Facino Cane* is the story of a blind musician, a former Venetian prince, who possessed the magic power of seeing hidden gold through walls. After a series of murders and escapades, and blind and impoverished, he descended to the deepest degradation. This story is also one of the semi-reminiscent tales of a period of Balzac's youth spent in the Rue Lesdiguières. In an interesting passage he explains his intuitive power of penetrating another person's mind and soul and of projecting his own personality into his characters and living, so to speak, their lives.⁴⁷⁹

The last story in Volume XII is *Les Martyrs ignorés* (*Fragment de Phédon d'aujourd'hui*),⁴⁸⁰ written in dialogue. A few writers and scholars are accustomed to gather in the evenings around the "Table des Philosophes" at the Café Voltaire. The action takes place in December, 1827.

⁴⁷⁸ This tale first appeared in *La Chronique de Paris*, March 17, 1836. After publication in the category under consideration it was published with a new title, *Le Père Cane*. See above, n. 465. In 1844, but under its first title, the story entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. X ("Scènes de la vie parisienne"), and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVI.

⁴⁷⁹ See Paul Bourget, *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*, II, 87 ff.

⁴⁸⁰ After this tale appeared in the division under consideration it was, together with *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin* and *Une Rue de Paris et son habitant*, published by Chlendorowski in 3 vols., in 1848. It is now in the *OD.*, I, 351-88.

a time when Balzac actually lived in the neighborhood of the café.⁴⁸¹ Each of the group tells a story which illustrates the ravaging effects of exaggerated thought upon men, "les martyrs ignorés." This feature aligns the story with *La Peau de chagrin*, *Louis Lambert*, *Melmoth réconcilié*, and others in the *Etudes philosophiques*, where the author originally placed it. One of the speakers gives the main idea: "La pensée est plus puissante que ne l'est le corps, elle le mange, l'absorbe et le détruit; la pensée est le plus violent de tous les agents de destruction, elle est le véritable ange exterminateur de l'humanité qu'elle tue et vivifie, car elle vivifie et tue."⁴⁸² Next, the interlocutor varies his thought but slightly: "Savez-vous ce que j'entends par penser? Les passions, les vices, les occupations extrêmes, les douleurs, les plaisirs sont des torrens de pensées. Réunissez sur un point donnée quelques idées violentes, un homme est tué par elles comme s'il recevait un coup de poignard."⁴⁸³ In spite of these definitions, obviously classifying *Les Martyrs ignorés* as belonging to the philosophical series, the story never entered the *Comédie humaine*. One is tempted to conjecture that, had Balzac lived to complete his work, this tale would have remained among the *Etudes philosophiques* and later been included in the second division of the *Comédie humaine*.

Volume XIII, also of the third *livraison*, contained but one story, *Le Secret des Ruggieri*.⁴⁸⁴ Here Balzac takes up the events after the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, when the king, Charles IX, became aware of his mother's insatiable ambition, her passion for power to which all other sentiments were sacrificed. He himself consulted Laurent and Cosme as to the future and thus learned the extent of their influence on his mother's policy.⁴⁸⁵ This tale, under a less appropriate title, *La Confiance des Ruggieri*, now forms Part II of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*. The reason for this

⁴⁸¹ Baldensperger, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁴⁸² *Martyrs ignorés*, *Etudes philosophiques*, éd. Werdet, XII, 251-52.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-53.

⁴⁸⁴ This story first appeared in *La Chronique de Paris*, December, 1836. With an "Introduction," it was published by Souverain in 1842, in 3 vols., together with *Le Martyr calviniste*, under the general title *Catherine de Médicis expliquée*; under the same title the story was published by Chlendowski in 1845, in 3 vols. In 1846, under the new title *La Confiance des Ruggieri*, it was placed as Part II of *Sur Catherine de Médicis* in the *Etudes philosophiques*, *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVI; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXX. See W. L. Crain's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "A Critical Edition of *Le Secret des Ruggieri*" (University of Chicago, 1937), and chap. iv of this volume.

⁴⁸⁵ *Sur Catherine de Médicis* was not finished until 1842. The complete novel will be discussed in the section on the Furne ed. of the *Comédie humaine*.

change in title is obscure. *Le Secret des Ruggieri* refers definitely to the information withheld by the Ruggieri from Charles IX, who sought to learn whether the queen, his mother, had attempted to poison him. This title, therefore, seems more closely related to the action of the story than the rather vague *La Confiance*. Since *Les Deux Rêves*, now Part III of the same novel, was published in 1831 under the collective title *Romans et contes philosophiques*, it is logical that *Le Secret des Ruggieri* should be likewise classified in the same series. In this story Balzac presents the cabalistic doctrine of the brothers Ruggieri, whom he calls "les deux personnages philosophiques."⁴⁸⁶ These counselors to Catherine, whom she trusted implicitly, were seeking by means of their astrological formulas the mystery of life. The following characterization of Catherine also has a bearing on the classification of the story:

Deux mots expliquent cette femme si curieuse à étudier. ... Ces deux mots sont Domination et Astrologie. Exclusivement ambitieuse, Catherine de Médicis n'eut d'autre passion que celle du pouvoir. Superstitieuse et fataliste comme le furent tant d'hommes supérieurs, elle n'eut de croyances sincères que les Sciences Occultes.⁴⁸⁷

Volume XVI, the last of the third *livraison* to be discussed, contained only one new story, *Une Passion dans le désert*,⁴⁸⁸ an episode from a projected novel, *Les Français en Egypte*. Obviously from its title, this novel was intended for the proposed *Scènes de la vie militaire* but was left unfinished. In order to fill two *feuilles*⁴⁸⁹ for the completion of this volume, Balzac put the story temporarily in the *Etudes philosophiques*. In 1846, however, this tale, the experience of a soldier during the French campaign in Egypt, rightfully took its place in the limited group of military stories. There is some controversy as to its origin. Mme Surville⁴⁹⁰ maintains that it was suggested by Martin, the famous trainer of animals; on the other hand, Ratier,⁴⁹¹ the editor of *La Silhouette*, claims the honor for himself. It is more than probable that both sources were involved. This tale concludes our discussion of the third *livraison*.

⁴⁸⁶ *Con.*, XXX, 268.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁸ This story first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, December, 1830. After its publication in the *Etudes philosophiques*, it was published, together with *Modeste Mignon* and *Un Episode sous la Terreur*, by G. Roux and Cassanet in 4 vols. In 1846 it entered the "Scènes de la vie militaire" (*Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIII), and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXII.

⁴⁸⁹ *Pensées, sujets, fragmens*, éd. Crépet, p. 103.

⁴⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁴⁹¹ Sée Lov., *Hist.*, p. 403.

Chronologically speaking, *Le Livre des douleurs*, published⁴⁹² in 1840, does not belong to the second period of Balzac's literary career. Since, however, it forms the fourth *livraison* of the *Etudes philosophiques*, it should be considered under the present caption. When, in 1835, the author planned this *livraison*, he designated for it a particular story,⁴⁹³ *Le Livre des douleurs* and indicated its main idea and coloring in his notebook:

Le Livre des douleurs est une étude destinée à prouver qu'il existe un point d'appui matériel dans la pensée pour supporter les plus effroyables douleurs et que ce n'est pas un secours venu d'en haut. En ôtant l'idée religieuse chrétienne et prenant trois exemples authentiques: Béatrice de Cenci.—Le tailleur de Henri II ou tout autre martyr protestant et un régicide Chatel ou Damiens.⁴⁹⁴

No single story of like title was ever written; but the subject was developed in *Les Martyrs ignorés*,⁴⁹⁵ particularly in the tale of the unbroken spirit of Robert-François Damiens, who had been first tortured, then quartered, for having struck Louis XV with a penknife.⁴⁹⁶ When, finally, the fourth *livraison* went on sale, June 4, 1840, it bore the title *Le Livre des douleurs*, which may be, like *Le Livre mystique* (1835 and 1836), properly considered a subdivision of the later *Etudes philosophiques*.

Le Livre des douleurs, the only *livraison* bearing a general title, included four stories. Of these, *Les Proscrits* and *Séraphita* had been previously published, together with other philosophical tales, under collective titles, while *Gambara* and *Massimilla Doni* had been temporarily grouped with still other novels in individual volumes.

*Gambara*⁴⁹⁷ is, above all, a study of a master-passion, an ideal in art, the pursuit of which, as in *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*, led to a human tragedy. Paolo Gambara—"ce Louis Lambert," as Balzac designates him in a letter—is only a theorist: his great desire to regenerate music and his passion to attain the ideal in sound, as Frenhofer sought to do in painting, key him up to an "extase musicale" but paralyze all creative ability with-

⁴⁹² By Souverain, in 5 vols.

⁴⁹³ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, pp. 436, 441.

⁴⁹⁴ Lov. Coll., A 181, fol. 99.

⁴⁹⁵ See above, p. 116.

⁴⁹⁶ *Larousse du XX^e siècle*.

⁴⁹⁷ This story first appeared in *La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, July-August, 1837. In 1839 it was published, together with *Le Cabinet des antiques*, by Souverain in 2 vols. It entered the category under consideration in 1840, and in 1846 the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XV. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVIII.

in him. When he attempts to interpret his ideas in composition and in execution, he is no longer understood except by his wife, Marianna.⁴⁹⁸ This great artist, the inventor of the panharmonicon, an instrument designed to replace a whole orchestra, is finally reduced to singing duos with his wife on street corners. Gambara becomes the mouthpiece of his creator whose theory he analyzes lucidly:

... nous sommes victimes de notre propre supériorité ... quand la musique passe de la sensation à l'idée, elle ne peut avoir que des gens de génie pour auditeurs, car eux seuls ont la puissance de la développer. Mon malheur vient d'avoir écouté les concerts des anges et d'avoir cru que les hommes pouvaient les comprendre. ... Ah! Monsieur, dit-il d'une voix sourde, au moins fallait-il me laisser ma folie.⁴⁹⁹

The temporary coupling, in 1839, of *Gambara* and a story of life in the provinces, *Le Cabinet des antiques*, was merely a question of expediency. In two letters dated December, 1839, Balzac comments on this exigency to his publisher, Souverain. He states that *Gambara* will supply the lacking twelve *feuilles* for the completion of the volume.⁵⁰⁰ Moreover, in one of his typical prefaces he confirms the fact: "... *Gambara* [est] une *Etude philosophique* ajoutée à une *Etude de mœurs* pour arriver au nombre de *feuilles* exigé par la jurisprudence bibliographique."⁵⁰¹ Balzac announced the central purpose of the story in a letter of May 29, 1837, to Maurice Schlesinger, editor of *La Gazette musicale*. It was, the author said, to "exprimer mes idées en musique, si toutefois je puis réduire mes sensations à l'état d'idées, et en tirer quelque chose qui ait l'air d'un système philosophique."⁵⁰² Again, in a letter to Mme Hanska, he justifies his classification of *Gambara* and *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* in this *livraison*.

Massimilla Doni et *Gambara* sont, dans les *Etudes philosophiques*, l'apparition de la musique, sous la double forme d'*exécution* et de *composition*, soumise à la même épreuve que la pensée dans *Louis Lambert*, c'est-à-dire l'œuvre et l'exécution tuées par la trop grande abondance du principe créateur, ce qui m'a dicté *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* pour la peinture. ...⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁸ In her love for Gambara there is something of the devotion and understanding which Pauline de Villenoix has for Louis Lambert; in both cases the women seem to be in love with genius.

⁴⁹⁹ *Con.*, XXVIII, 106, 101. Cf. the situation of Frenhofer, the painter, in *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*.

⁵⁰⁰ W. S. Hastings, *Balzac and Souverain*, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁰¹ Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève* and *Massimilla Doni*, *OD.*, III, 528.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 495.

⁵⁰³ *LEt.*, I, 398-99. Letter dated May 24, 1837.

This statement is important, since it embodies Balzac's own alignment of the major illustrations of his theory as demonstrated in the *Etudes philosophiques*.

The small number of variations⁵⁰⁴ between the first edition (1837) and the Conard proves that Balzac had well in mind, from the beginning, the specific niche into which the novel was to be fitted. In 1846 he inserted a brief comment to link *Gambara* more intimately with the *Etudes philosophiques* and placed it finally in the *Comédie humaine*.

Closely related in thought and method to the preceding story is *Massimilla Doni*,⁵⁰⁵ in fact, Taine considers the two tales as a "petit roman en deux parties."⁵⁰⁶ In *Massimilla Doni* Balzac continues his exposition of the ideal of art in general and of music in particular, as presented in *Gambara* and in *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*. The story, in which he deals with thought and passion as destructive of creative ability and of human life, becomes, therefore, an integral part of the *Etudes philosophiques*. In explaining Genovese's failure to sing the aria, Balzac makes the following claim:

Quand un artiste a le malheur d'être plein de la passion qu'il veut exprimer, il ne saurait la peindre, car il est la chose même au lieu d'en être l'image. L'art procède du cerveau et non du cœur. Quand votre sujet vous domine, vous en êtes l'esclave et non le maître. Vous êtes comme un roi assiégé par son peuple. Sentir trop vivement au moment où il s'agit d'exécuter, c'est l'insurrection des sens contre la faculté!⁵⁰⁷

One is inclined to believe that the author here interprets his own experience. Apparently, he was satisfied with *Massimilla Doni*, for on May 24, 1837, he wrote to Mme Hanska that he had just finished the story, and added: "Si je puis réaliser toutes mes idées comme elles se sont présentées dans ma tête, ce sera, certes, un livre aussi étourdissant que la *Peau de chagrin*, mieux écrit, plus poétique peut-être."⁵⁰⁸ In his long disquisitions on music and in his careful analysis of Rossini's opera *Mosé*, Balzac de-

⁵⁰⁴ See H. S. Graybill, "Variations and Realism in Balzac's *Gambara*" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1927).

⁵⁰⁵ This story was first published, together with *Une Fille d'Ève*, by Souverain in 2 vols. A fragment, "Une Représentation du *Mosé* de Rossini à Venise," appeared in *La France musicale*, August 25, 1839. After its appearance in *Le Livre des douleurs* (1840), the story entered the *Etudes philosophiques*, *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XV (1846), and is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVII.

⁵⁰⁶ Taine, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁵⁰⁷ *Con.*, XXVII, 462.

⁵⁰⁸ *LEt.*, I, 398.

velops an interesting thesis of mysticism in music; he says that the emotion aroused by music detaches the listener from reality and lifts him into the metaphysical spheres and into the infinite.⁵⁰⁹ Man can attain similar mystical voluptuousness, he continues, through platonic love, as did Emilio de Varese,⁵¹⁰ or through opium, as did Vendramin.

The story is almost plotless. Interest is centered in the development of artistic theories rather than in action or in characters. The latter exist merely to demonstrate the author's thesis. The love between Emilio and Massimilla, the loss of Genovese's voice, the disintegration of Vendramin's personality, merely supply loose connecting threads of narrative. Contrary to the other philosophical tales, this one ends well, through the intervention of the materialistic and wise French physician, who brings about the happiness of the lovers and restores to Genovese his beautiful voice; for Vendramin, the opium addict, the physician can do nothing. Balzac, soon after his return from Italy in 1837, announced this story as a philosophical study. Its first title, *Les Deux Amours*, later kept as a chapter caption, was changed to the more specific *Massimilla Doni*. This story concludes our analyses of the *Etudes philosophiques*, Werdet edition, and closes Balzac's second period.

The significant features of the second period in Balzac's literary career are: (1) the development and the crystallization of his scheme, in structure and scope; (2) its unification through the introduction of reappearing characters (May, 1833); (3) his decision to become the social historian of French society of the nineteenth century; and (4) his creation of the *roman social* as a medium suitable for carrying out his intentions. At the basis of his scheme lies a deterministic, scientific view founded on his theory that environment, trades, and professions divide men, so to speak, into social species comparable to the classifications of the zoölogical world. This theory, discernible in 1830, was fully adopted as a basic working principle by 1837.

In the process of development, as he observed and analyzed society, Balzac reached the conclusion that only a few fundamental principles actuate numerous causes, which in turn bring about numberless effects or actions occurring in everyday life. The three motivating factors in human society—principles, causes, and effects—underlie the three main divisions of the plan which form different levels in the structure of the future *Comédie humaine*.

⁵⁰⁹ *Con.*, XXVII, 425.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 425, 427.

By 1837 Balzac's plan had taken concrete form in the publication of fifty classified stories, of which twenty-two were new, while twenty-eight consisted of old material, revised, enlarged, and fitted to the growing system. The scheme now comprised two main divisions: the *Etudes de mœurs* and the *Etudes philosophiques*. The first edition of the former series contained twenty-five stories, of which eleven were new (plus the two last episodes of *Les Trois Vengeances*). These, distributed among the three subdivisions, were ultimately retained as such in the *Comédie humaine*. Within the second period the third edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée" was made to include two of the new titles; the first edition of the "Scènes de la vie de province" was assigned six; the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," three, since the *Histoire des Treize* is regarded as one novel. Of these eleven new stories in the first edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*, five were later transposed: one each from the "Scènes de la vie privée" and the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" were permanently placed in the *Etudes philosophiques*; one from the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" and two from the "Scènes de la vie de province" were ultimately shifted to the "Scènes de la vie privée."

The almost equal number of new stories in each main division seems to indicate an interest evenly divided among the groups. Such is not the case; there was an overlapping. Although the new stories of the *Etudes de mœurs* were published strictly within the second period (1833-37), the publication of the eleven new stories of the *Etudes philosophiques* was extended into the third (1833-40). Of these stories, four were presently reclassified: one was permanently assigned to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; two others were temporarily placed in the same subdivision and finally put in the "Scènes de la vie privée"; one was directly transferred to the "Scènes de la vie militaire."

During the second period Balzac's novels exhibit the growth of a sociological interest which leads to a still greater broadening of the scheme toward the all-inclusive scope of the third period. This will be the matter for analysis in our next section.

V. THIRD PERIOD: 1837-41

Our discussion of the third period in Balzac's literary career (1837-41) is necessarily short, since there were no new serial publications except the reprint of the *Etudes de mœurs*. The period embraces, however, an important phase in the development of the novelist's general plans.

In the preceding section we discussed the formulation and the establish-

ment of Balzac's scheme; we analyzed the classification of stories in the first edition of the *Etudes de mœurs* and the *Etudes philosophiques*. However, his classification at that time was not final, since it did not yet include all works produced during the second period (1833-37). Three important social studies—*Le Médecin de campagne*, *Le Père Goriot*, and *Le Lys dans la vallée*⁵¹¹—were published independently of subdivisions between 1833 and 1836 and were not included in the second edition of the *Etudes de mœurs* (1839). Balzac also published, in separate volumes, between 1837 and 1839, seven other unclassified novels:⁵¹² *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau*, *La Maison Nucingen*, *Illusions perdues* (Part II, *Un Grand Homme de province à Paris*), *La Torpille* (Part I of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*), *La Femme supérieure* (*Le Employés*), *Le Cabinet des antiques*, and *Une Fille d'Ève*.

These titles arrest our attention; each demonstrates a sociological interest either in groups or in institutions and indicates Balzac's more intensive study of types and groups. Such a view is strengthened by his insertions,⁵¹³ which usually took the form of more extensive *dossiers* concerning sociohistorical institutions and events. The ten novels cited are of importance in a study of the developments⁵¹⁴ in Balzac's plans; the stages are shown not only in the novels but also in the prefaces written for them.

It is well now to check the aspects of the unfolding scheme apparent especially in the last seven novels. In *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau* and in *La Maison Nucingen* Balzac portrays private business and banking on a large scale and thus affords a view of various milieus. This is done, in the first novel, Part I, by giving a detailed account of a busy day in the life of César and by presenting his grand ball. One hundred and four reappearing characters figure in the first novel, and fifty in the second. *Illusions perdues*,⁵¹⁵ Balzac's largest tableau of life, including the work of literary men, journalists, printers, lawyers, and usurers, contains one hundred and sixteen reappearing characters. In *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* he gives a new aspect of

⁵¹¹ See below, pp. 145, 147, 163.

⁵¹² For the analyses and classification of these novels, see below, pp. 148, 150, 149, 152, 151, 144, 136.

⁵¹³ See studies in variations in other chapters of this volume.

⁵¹⁴ In Sec. III, in the analyses of certain stories, we were forced to anticipate, to some degree, the present discussion.

⁵¹⁵ Part I, *Les Deux Poètes*; see above, p. 102.

French society, the Bohemian life of actresses and courtesans, with the highest number of reappearing characters—one hundred and fifty-five. These last two compositions present “le monde exceptionnel.”⁵¹⁶ Indeed, the first novel may be called “epic” in structure and spirit. It portrays the life and work of Lucien de Rubempré, whose “illusions,” nurtured in Angoulême, are lost in Paris, the all-devouring monster. In *Les Employés*, the novelist depicted a large bureaucratic group—the clerks of the government. In this novel Mary Scott has reported ninety-six recurring characters.⁵¹⁷ In *Le Cabinet des antiques*, in which Ethel Preston⁵¹⁸ counted fifty-six reappearing characters, Balzac pictured a very large circle of aristocrats and politicians both in the provinces and in the capital. In *Une Fille d’Ève* he returned to the depiction of domesticity disturbed by the Bohemian type of journalist; this story contains forty-two reappearing characters. We see, therefore, that in these novels (written between 1836 and 1839) he reached his widest scope in presentation of French society, including the financial, the political, the literary, and the theatrical world. Moreover, in this depiction, as Brunetière has justly said, our novelist achieved “l’incomparable solidité.”⁵¹⁹

This solidity and massive effect Balzac largely attained by bringing into relation character with character, story with story, thereby closely integrating the component parts of his literary monument. These recurring characters, like threads on the weaver’s loom, cross and recross each other and give verisimilitude to an interdependent society. In this manner all the material, moral, and spiritual factors of group life are artistically correlated. The number of reappearing characters, greater than those introduced prior to 1836,⁵²⁰ is conclusive evidence of the development of his plan.

This growth is manifest not only in the larger number of reappearing characters, in insertions, and in revisions of sociological import but also in Balzac’s concurrently written prefaces. Of special interest are the prefaces⁵²¹ to *Illusions perdues* (1837 and 1839); to *Les Employés*, *La Maison*

⁵¹⁶ See above, p. 102, n. 423.

⁵¹⁷ “Variations between the First and Second Edition of Balzac’s *Les Employés*,” *MP*, XXIII, 331.

⁵¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, Appen. VI.

⁵¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Canfield, art. cit., *RHL*, XLI, 15.

⁵²¹ Partly discussed from a different point of view; see above, p. 105.

Nucingen, and *La Torpille* (1838); and to *Le Cabinet des antiques* and *Une Fille d'Ève* (1838).

The significance of the Preface⁵²² to *Illusions perdues*, Part I (1837), lies in the fact that here, for the first time since Davin's introductions, Balzac gave the range and the scope of his categories and explained the basic principle, a view of contemporary society, as an organization based on the analogy of zoölogy.⁵²³ The Preface to Part II (1839), in which he restated with greater emphasis the sociological aspect of his work, takes the form of an indignant outburst against the wiles of journalism and is also a plea for the independence of writers. In the Preface to *Le Cabinet des antiques* (1839) and in that to Part III of *Illusions perdues* (1844)—it is necessary to anticipate, since the latter to a degree reiterates the former—Balzac stressed the closer interlocking of all the component parts of the scheme, thus securing, as he stated, a more harmonious and integrated whole. Furthermore, he introduced a new aspect of his theory: the notable opposition between the provinces and the capital by statement of parallels and differences. Also, he indicated the links which connect the provinces with Paris; the unifying force is embodied in the young men Lucien de Rubempré and the Count of Esgrignon, who, said the author, "vont et viennent de la province à Paris, ayant quelques-unes des conditions du talent sans avoir celles du succès."⁵²⁴ In *Le Cabinet des antiques* an impoverished provincial aristocracy seeks means and ways in Paris to re-establish its lost fortune; in *Illusions perdues* an ambitious poet welds provincial and metropolitan life in his quest for fame; in *Les Mitouflet*,⁵²⁵ a projected work, Balzac intended, so he said, to portray a wealthy manufacturer seeking honors in the capital. Nobility, genius, wealth—in representative characters—became, then, the nexus between the provinces and Paris in the second and third subdivisions of the *Etudes de mœurs*.

One further point must be made in regard to this integration of categories in the *Etudes de mœurs*. Balzac felt in 1839 that even with *Illusions perdues* and *Le Cabinet des antiques* his picture of provincial life was not yet complete. He said: "*Les Scènes de la vie de province* n'auraient-elles pas été incomplètes, si, après avoir accusé le mouvement ascensionnel de la province vers Paris, l'auteur n'indiquait pas le mouvement opposé?"⁵²⁶ This project was carried out in 1843 through *Les Parisiens en province*:

⁵²² See preceding note.

⁵²³ Cf. Sec. IV, p. 90; Sec. VI, pp. 133-35.

⁵²⁴ OD., III, 514.

⁵²⁵ This work was never published.

⁵²⁶ OD., III, 515.

Part I, *L'Illustre Gaudissart*, a reprint of 1833; Part II, *La Muse du département*. He said further that after the composition of the projected *Les Héritiers Boirouge*⁵²⁷ there would still remain to be done "la peinture de la garnison des villes de province et celle de quelques figures assez originales aperçues après coup, pour que cette partie de l'œuvre soit achevée."⁵²⁸ This plan was never fulfilled.

In the Preface to *La Femme supérieure*, *La Maison Nucingen*, and *La Torpille* (1838), Balzac speaks less of the co-ordination of his scheme and more of his own function as a historian.⁵²⁹ He gives in his novels, he says, "l'esprit des événements ... il les synthétise." In the Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève* (1839) he recapitulates briefly the main ideas of the *Etudes de mœurs* with greater emphasis on the device of reappearing characters which tie up the divisions of the plan. For example, in the persons of the actress Florine and Rastignac, the novelist connects the first three subdivisions of the *Etudes de mœurs*.⁵³⁰ These instances illustrate the proportions of the scheme. Its further development, given in his prefaces written in 1842 and later, is, of course, evinced in the Furne edition of the *Comédie humaine*.

At once the question rises whether this growth of purpose caused Balzac to reclassify the novels and tales reprinted during this brief period. The second edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*, published by Charpentier in 1839, points to a negative answer. It contained the fourth edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée," the second of the "Scènes de la vie de province," and the second of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." Each of the three groups appeared in two volumes; they did not, however, include all the stories of the Béchét-Werdet edition. The long stories, such as *La Recherche de l'absolu*, *Eugénie Grandet*, and *Histoire des Treize* (the first two episodes), were each published (1839) in separate volumes; consequently, the twenty-six tales of the first edition of the *Etudes de mœurs* are all reprinted in the second edition. There were no new tales except *L'Interdiction*,⁵³¹ temporarily placed in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." It is clear, therefore, that the order but not the classification of the stories in each volume differed from that of the first edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*.

⁵²⁷ *Fragments d'histoire générale. Scène de la vie de province* (fragment publié par le vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, *RDM*, XLII [1917], 881-84). Chap. ii, "Ursule Mirouët," contains two lines only. See below, p. 141.

⁵²⁸ *OD.*, III, 515.

⁵³⁰ *OD.*, III, 522-23.

⁵²⁹ See above, p. 88, n. 366.

⁵³¹ See above, p. 109.

It is impossible to trust Balzac's frequent statements concerning his revisions and corrections. The Charpentier edition is a case in point. One would expect considerable variations between the first and the second edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*. But the second, practically a reprint of the first, contains no textual changes except those of punctuation: a greater number of commas is introduced, making for greater clarity. Therefore, the period between 1837 and 1839 was an interregnum in which no new serial publications were added. In spite of the fact that Balzac was revising, inserting, and re-writing his works during the third period, the most sweeping changes⁵³² in text and classification of stories occur in the later Furne edition of the fourth period.

Here another question arises, that of the expansion of Balzac's purview upon his choice of a general title. With the drift toward the integration of more and more novels into a co-ordinated whole the idea of an all-inclusive title must have been coexistent in his mind. At least, such is the impression made by his letters of this period. It has been pointed out in Section III that, concurrently with the publication of the first edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*, Balzac had proposed a general title for all his works to date, namely, *Les Etudes sociales*.⁵³³ On March 30, 1835, he wrote to Mme Hanska concerning a second edition of the *Etudes de mœurs*; in May of the same year he definitely stated, although contrary to fact, that "dans l'année 1837 ... mes œuvres deviendront les *Etudes sociales*."⁵³⁴ By this title the author draws attention to the developing sociological aspect of his work. This proposed general title was to include the three main divisions: "Etudes de mœurs," "Etudes philosophiques," and "Etudes analytiques." The work was to be published "par mode de tontine,"⁵³⁵ a system devised by Lorenzo Tonti (ca. 1653) in which subscribers become shareholders in the publication. For this project three thousand subscribers were needed, and the plan failed. The proposed edition was to have been illustrated and is referred to by the novelist as *Balzac illustré*. This scheme was partly realized in the publication of one volume, *La Peau de chagrin*,⁵³⁶ which appeared under the general title *Balzac illustré* and

⁵³² See studies in variations in other chapters of this volume.

⁵³³ See above, p. 87.

⁵³⁴ *LEt.*, I, 242, 247.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 409, 413. For the interest which the Balzac family had in the tontine Lafarge, see *Con.*, XXI, 439. Cf. *LF.*, p. 30, n. 4, and p. 199.

⁵³⁶ *Bibliographie de la France* (1838). See Dargan, Crain, and Others, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-72.

under the subtitle *Etudes sociales*. According to the author's letter of February, 1838,⁵³⁷ the sale of this volume was good; nevertheless, after that date there is no further mention of *Balzac illustré* or of the *Etudes sociales*. Apparently, this general title did not completely express the author's idea, and the search for a more comprehensive title continued.

How and when Balzac decided upon the title *La Comédie humaine* has long been a point of interest among his various critics. Baldensperger⁵³⁸ seems to credit the claim of Henry Reeve that the latter had suggested the title in a conversation with Balzac. In a letter to his friend E. H. Handley, Reeve, apparently relaying his conversation with the Frenchman, wrote: "If Balzac wants a title . . . I shall beg to suggest the parody of Dante's 'Divina Commedia'—for this modern 'Commedia' is *tutta diabolica*."⁵³⁹ This communication does not necessarily assert that Reeve actually made the suggestion to Balzac. Moreover, there is no evidence for Reeve's advice in Balzac's letters. Lovenjoul⁵⁴⁰ believed the title had its origin in the enthusiasm of the novelist's friend, the Marquis de Belloy, for Dante's epic; Le Breton⁵⁴¹ likewise accepted this theory. Curtius,⁵⁴² however, concurs with Julien Lemer⁵⁴³ in holding that, since the author named his subdivisions *scènes*, the whole work should logically take the name "drama," and *comédie* was a simple, fitting term. Curtius elaborates the point and discovers analogies from Plato down to Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau*; he asserts that the expression *comédie* was applied to prose fiction during the first half of the nineteenth century by Gautier, Musset, and others. Marie-Jeanne Durry finds a *rapprochement* between the title and a statement made by Stendhal in 1836, which she quotes: "Depuis que la démocratie a peuplé le théâtre de gens grossiers incapables de comprendre les choses fines, je regarde le Roman comme la Comédie du XIX^e siècle."⁵⁴⁴ Her contention is that the two great contemporaries independently of each other had a similar conception of the function of the novel.

⁵³⁷ *LEt.*, I, 460.

⁵³⁸ "Une Suggestion anglaise pour le titre de *la Comédie humaine*," *Revue de littérature comparée*, I (1921), 638-39.

⁵³⁹ Sir John K. Laughton, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve*, I, 39-40.

⁵⁴⁰ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 414.

⁵⁴² Balzac, pp. 333-35.

⁵⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁵⁴³ Balzac. *Sa vie, son œuvre*, p. 148.

⁵⁴⁴ "A propos de *la Comédie humaine*," *RHL*, January-March, 1936, p. 98.

Whatever relationship may be suggested in the term *comédie*, Balzac's early (1829) and frequent allusions⁵⁴⁵ to Dante's *Divine Comedy* show the association as present in his mind. In his letters to Mme Hanska from November, 1833, to September, 1841, I have found nine allusions—three to Beatrice, five to the "Inferno," and one to the "Paradiso." In seven instances he compares his love for Mme Hanska to that of Dante for Beatrice; in two, he likens Paris, which he wishes to forget, to the Inferno.

References to Dante increase steadily in Balzac's work between 1829 and 1841. Their nature is varied. During that period I have noted fifty-one⁵⁴⁶ direct and several miscellaneous and incidental allusions. These are significant and, I believe, led to the use of the title *Comédie humaine*.

Among the more important of these instances is that in *La Physiologie du mariage*;⁵⁴⁷ that in *Les Chouans* (1829);⁵⁴⁸ several in *Les Proscrits* (1831), where Dante is presented as a leading character; one in *Un Lendemain*,⁵⁴⁹ in which the author alludes to the Francesca da Rimini episode, repeated in the *Illusions perdues* (1834) and in *Le Lys dans la vallée* (1836). Further, in *La Fille aux yeux d'or* (1834) he refers to Paris as an Inferno which would someday have its Dante. This prophetic allusion implies a definite relation to his adoption of the title. In *L'Expiation (La Femme de trente ans* [1832])⁵⁵⁰ he draws analogies between the denizens of the Inferno and those of his own created world. In speaking of the structure of the *Divine Comedy* Balzac calls it a "gigantic labyrinth";⁵⁵¹ frequently he mentions Dante's vision in *Le Livre mystique* (1835-36) and especially in *Séraphita* and *Louis Lambert*. Dante's treatment of adultery finds an echo in Balzac's *La Muse du département* (1837),⁵⁵² and in *La Torpille*⁵⁵³ he claims that certain torments are not included in the Inferno. Aside from its significant title, the novel *Béatrix* (1839) contains many allusions, even though his conception of this character is entirely different from that of Dante. Finally, there are miscellaneous and incidental references to the poet ad libitum throughout Balzac's works. In view of both character and number of the instances cited above, it is the definite conclusion of the present writer that our novelist's early and increasing interest in the

⁵⁴⁵ See above, p. 28.

⁵⁴⁶ For some of these I am indebted to Professor Furman A. Bridgers.

⁵⁴⁷ Noted above, p. 28.

⁵⁴⁹ *OD.*, I, 264.

⁵⁴⁸ III, 147.

⁵⁵⁰ IV, 351.

⁵⁵¹ *L'Enfant maudit (Romans et contes philosophiques* [1836]), IV, 132.

⁵⁵² III, 16.

⁵⁵³ *Ed. Werdet*, 1838, p. 180.

Divine Comedy had a direct bearing on his creation of the synthetic title, *La Comédie humaine*, so admirably adapted to his works.

The next question that confronts us is whether Balzac used the title, as is commonly asserted, in 1841 or earlier. J. F. Jackson⁵⁵⁴ has based his argument for 1838 on a letter from our novelist to Mme Hanska dated January 20 of that year. This letter is to be found in Balzac's *Correspondance*,⁵⁵⁵ a volume which is now generally known to be wholly unreliable. If we concede that the dating of the letter may be correct, there is still serious doubt as to the authenticity of its contents. A comparison of the document in question with its counterpart printed in the *Lettres à l'Etrangère*⁵⁵⁶ (whose text is usually more reliable than the *Correspondance*) makes us critical of Jackson's suggestion, since the particular passage cited by him is omitted. Therefore, for want of more accurate proof, it is safe to assume that, so far as present evidence shows, Balzac mentioned the title for the first time on June 1, 1841.⁵⁵⁷

At this point in our study certain steps bring us to obvious conclusions: (1) an expansion of sociological import is evinced in the lengthy novels not classified until 1842; (2) the increasing frequency and the nature of references to the *Divine Comedy* ultimately led Balzac to the adaptation of the title for his own works; and (3), so far as I am now able to ascertain, his first mention of *La Comédie humaine* to Mme Hanska was in a letter dated June 1, 1841.

Having reached these conclusions, we must now turn to the paramount objective of this study, the classification of the novels under the general title *La Comédie humaine* (Furne ed.).

VI. FOURTH PERIOD: 1842-48

Under this comprehensive title, *Comédie humaine*, Balzac now includes the tripartite division of his works:⁵⁵⁸ "Etudes de mœurs" (3d ed.), "Etudes philosophiques" (5th ed.), and "Etudes analytiques" (1st ed.). An agreement for publication was signed on October 2, 1841,⁵⁵⁹ with Furne, Dubochet, Hetzel, and Paulin. Soon after, April 10, 1842,⁵⁶⁰ our

⁵⁵⁴ "Dating Balzac's Adoption of the Title *La Comédie humaine*," *MLN*, XLII (December, 1927), 525-26.

⁵⁵⁵ *OC.*, XXIV, 276.

⁵⁵⁶ *LEt.*, I, 451-56.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 557. This date is confirmed by M. Bouteron. It is regrettable that the writer has had no access to the original letter of 1838, the very existence of which is questionable.

⁵⁵⁸ Anticipated in a letter to Mme Hanska, October 26, 1834. See above, p. 87.

⁵⁵⁹ *LEt.*, II, 30.

⁵⁶⁰ See *N.R.F.*, I, xvi.

writer announced in a prospectus the *Comédie humaine* in sixteen volumes, stated very briefly the plan and the main ideas of the work, and gave what he then called the "definitive order" of the stories. Moreover, concerning the general title, now used for the first time, he informed his readers that "*La Comédie humaine* ... résume la pensée de l'écrivain et ... éclaire l'ensemble aussi bien que chaque détail"⁵⁶¹ of his work.

In 1846,⁵⁶² even before all the volumes of the first edition were published, Balzac, in another prospectus, announced a forthcoming edition of the *Comédie humaine* in seventeen volumes. Volume XVII,⁵⁶³ according to M. Bouteron, was the first supplement to the original sixteen and the last to appear during the life of the novelist. After his death three more supplementary volumes (XVIII, XIX, XX) were published between 1853 and 1855 by Mme Houssiaux; of these three, Volume XVIII⁵⁶⁴ alone was included in the *Comédie humaine*. Volume XVII was composed of two long novels of Parisian life, written after 1845; these appeared under the collective title: *Les Parents pauvres*:⁵⁶⁵ Part I, *La Cousine Bette*; Part II, *Le Cousin Pons*.

The first *livraison* of the *Comédie humaine* in sixteen volumes was announced on April 23, 1842.⁵⁶⁶ Balzac prefaced this edition with his famous manifesto, our next topic of discussion.

In the Preface to *Le Cabinet des antiques* (1839) Balzac perhaps anticipated the *Avant-propos* when he said: "Ces avertissements et ces préfaces doivent disparaître tout à fait lorsque l'ouvrage sera terminé et qu'il paraîtra dans sa véritable forme et complet."⁵⁶⁷ While the first edition of the *Comédie humaine* was in process of being printed, Hetzel, the publisher, wrote to Balzac in June, 1842: "Il est impossible de reproduire ces préfaces signées Félix Davin. Elles ont le tort d'avoir l'air écrites en grande partie par vous⁵⁶⁸ et d'être signées d'un autre nom ... leur effet, à la tête d'une chose capitale comme notre édition complète, serait détestable."⁵⁶⁹ Hetzel explained further that he wanted "un résumé, une brève

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. xix.

⁵⁶³ Published by Furne alone on November 18, 1848. See *ibid.* Cf. *LF.*, p. 304, n. 1, which contains an error.

⁵⁶⁴ See below, p. 152, n. 679; p. 159, n. 714. Vol. XIX contained *Le Théâtre*; and Vol. XX, *Les Contes drolatiques*.

⁵⁶⁵ See below, p. 218.

⁵⁶⁷ *OD.*, III, 518.

⁵⁶⁶ *Bibliographie de la France* (1842).

⁵⁶⁸ See above, pp. 88, 111.

⁵⁶⁹ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, *Autour de Honoré de Balzac*, p. 239.

explication de la chose écrite, signée par vous, ce qui implique une grande sobriété, une mesure très grande. ... Parlez comme un de vos héros, et vous ferez une chose utile, *indispensable*."⁵⁷⁰ One cannot forego citing this letter, because it definitely establishes the fact of Balzac's personal participation in Davin's Introduction (discussed earlier in this study); and it seems to warrant our assumption that at least in part the *Avant-propos* is the condensed and harmonized form in which are merged statements found previously in prefaces, prospectuses, and introductions. It is an artistic synthesis of the ideas elaborated in the *Comédie humaine* and is generally accepted as one of the most important literary manifestoes of the nineteenth century. Balzac fully realized its significance, for on July 13, 1842, he wrote: "Ces vingt-six pages m'ont donné plus de mal qu'un ouvrage, car elles prennent, par la circonstance, un caractère de solennité qui effraie celui qui prononce ces quelques paroles en tête d'une collection si volumineuse."⁵⁷¹

The *Avant-propos*, not corrected in Balzac's annotated volume of the *Comédie humaine*, Furne edition,⁵⁷² was published with variations on October 25, 1846 (in *La Presse*). However, the text in Conard (I, xxv-xxxviii) differs from the two just cited, notwithstanding Bouteron's⁵⁷³ statement that he utilized the variations of the 1846 printing. The Conard does contain some of the variations of 1846, yet remains closer to the edition of 1842. The irrelevant nature of the passages omitted and the elaboration of the additions in *La Presse* indicate that Balzac strove for a concentrated and clear statement of the basic philosophy in his *Comédie humaine*.

It has been stated above that the *Avant-propos* is in part a synthesis of Balzac's previously published prefaces. There still remains to be seen, however, what new vision the novelist expressed in his manifesto. Its importance consists in the light it throws on the total scheme now erected.

First, Balzac definitely indicates the time of his conception of the *Comédie humaine* as being "depuis bientôt treize ans," that is, from 1829, the year of *Les Chouans*. Next, he makes a final statement concerning his "biological" distinction among social species, which originated, he de-

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁵⁷¹ *LEt.*, II, 56.

⁵⁷² I, 7-32. The text reprinted in *N.R.F.*, I, 3-16, is identical with the uncorrected Furne ed., 1842.

⁵⁷³ *Con.*, I, 429.

clares, in his sustained comparison "entre l'Humanité et l'Animalité." Of this approach he had already spoken in 1837.⁵⁷⁴ His point of departure here was contemporary scientific thought as concerning unity in the composition of life. He says: "Il n'y a qu'un animal. ... [Il] est un principe qui prend sa forme extérieure, ou, pour parler plus exactement, les différences de sa forme, dans les milieux où il est appelé à se développer."⁵⁷⁵ It is precisely in these differences, Balzac maintains, that the variety of zoölogical species originates; and, he continues, mankind resembles animals in that the human being is a result of his environment. He seeks to integrate man in nature and to find in natural laws a justification of social laws. He asserts, therefore: "Il existera de tout temps des Espèces Sociales comme il y a des Espèces Zoologiques, *en dépit de notre théorie sur l'égalité.*"⁵⁷⁶ However, he adds: "Dans l'humanité par un immense courant de vie, *nous voyons s'accomplir sous nos yeux la transfusion des espèces inférieures dans la haute sphère.*" This assertion implies, according to the novelist, that a grocer may rise to the rank of a peer, that a peer may degenerate into the lowest strata of society; and that the wife of the former may be worthy of a prince, whereas that of the latter may not be worthy even of a merchant. In other words, chance, "le hasard," is admissible in society, although impossible in nature because of the immutability of its laws.

For this universal law, unity of composition, Balzac gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness by an enthusiastic dedication of *Le Père Goriot* to the "grand et illustre Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire comme témoignage d'admiration de ses travaux et de son génie." From the first page of the *Avant-propos* he glorified the scientist whose eternal honor it is, he says, to have proclaimed the system of unity in nature. Imbued with this idea—a digression at this point is not out of place—Balzac gives a scientific (physiological) description of social species throughout his *Comédie humaine* and especially voices his admiration in *Séraphita*⁵⁷⁷ and in *Ursule Mirouët*.⁵⁷⁸ His analogical conception has a vital place in the plan of his works, as vital as the hub around which a wheel revolves; although his method of classification is not exactly based on social species, it is, nonetheless, the symbol of unity⁵⁷⁹ in the *Comédie humaine*. It derives (see

⁵⁷⁴ *OD.*, III, 389; see above, pp. 90, 126.

⁵⁷⁵ *Con.*, I, xxvi.

⁵⁷⁶ The italics indicate additions in the text printed in *La Presse*, October 25, 1846.

⁵⁷⁷ *Con.*, XXXI, 198.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, VIII, 68.

⁵⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the objection raised by Chaudes-Aigues (see *La Revue de Paris*, new ser., XI [1839], 20-38).

Sec. IV) from Saint-Hilaire's ideas of (1) one principle, i.e., unity of composition in nature, and of (2) cause and effect; upon this theory Balzac sought to build his three main divisions. Furthermore, the scientist's law of environment gave rise to Balzac's conception of both milieu and period of human life reflected in the six subdivisions: the family is usually the setting or the theme for the *Scènes de la vie privée*; the capital of the *Vie parisienne*; the province for the most part of the *Vie de province*; the rural districts of the *Vie de campagne*; and then, without any restricted habitat but with definite themes and characters, come the military and political spheres. These subdivisions are not absolutely fixed and must be considered as shifting planes, but in each of them Balzac shows himself the physiologist and the painter of "mœurs transformistes,"⁵⁸⁰ the disciple of Saint-Hilaire. The remaining topics of the manifesto—Balzac's function as a historian and his analysis of the novel as a genre—have been treated in Section IV. With this analysis of the *Avant-propos* I shall now return to the discussion of the stories in which are illustrated its principles.

It is well to keep in mind that the first edition of the *Comédie humaine* contained three main divisions: "Etudes de mœurs," "Etudes philosophiques," and "Etudes analytiques"; and that the first division exhibits great expansion. For the first time it is made up of the six subdivisions indicated in 1834-35: "Scènes de la vie privée" (5th ed.); "Scènes de la vie de province" and "Scènes de la vie parisienne" (both 3d eds.); "Scènes de la vie politique," "Scènes de la vie militaire," and "Scènes de la vie de campagne" (all 1st eds.). Since Balzac's intentions for the first subdivision have been stated in connection with earlier editions, we shall proceed directly to the consideration of the fifth edition (1842-45) of the "Scènes de la vie privée." It contained, in all, twenty-three stories;⁵⁸¹ of these, fourteen had appeared in previous publications, but nine were new and will now be discussed.

*La Fausse Maîtresse*⁵⁸² is the story of Thaddée Paz and of his unselfish devotion to the wife of a lifelong friend, Adam Laginski. This theme and

⁵⁸⁰ Hélène d'Alsó, art. cit., *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation*, p. 354.

⁵⁸¹ *La Grande Bretèche* is not counted separately because it is indicated in the Furne ed. as the "fin" of *Autre Etude de femme*.

⁵⁸² This tale first appeared in *Le Siècle*, December, 1841. Next it was published in the subdivision under consideration; in order to make up the necessary forty-four *feuilles* of Vol. II, published by Dumont in 1844, our tale was temporarily coupled with *Un Début dans la vie*. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

its treatment fully harmonize with the atmosphere of the "Scènes de la vie privée," where it was placed from the start and to which it rightfully belongs.

Albert Savarus,⁵⁸³ an autobiographical story, deals with the love between Albert and the Duchesse d'Argaiolo and ends tragically because of the interference of an ignorant girl, Rosalie. In her *dossier* the novelist harks back to ideas expressed in his Preface to the first edition of the *Scènes de la vie privée*; he deplores Rosalie's lack of proper education and her insincerity because they poison her home life; "ce combat secret avait lieu dans l'enceinte la plus secrète de la vie domestique à huis clos."⁵⁸⁴ Rosalie's reading of other people's letters is the worst, continues Balzac, of all hidden crimes "dans les mystères de la vie privée." Such passages fit the setting of the "Scènes de la vie privée" and help to justify the classification of the tale there.

Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées,⁵⁸⁵ an epistolary novel, is the story of two young women, "amies de couvent." The romanesque Louise de Chaulieu marries for passion; the more prudent Renée de Maucombe, for expediency. Renée's letters depict charming scenes of private family life; the letters of Louise, showing excess of passion, form an effective contrast. The author's emphasis on the happiness of Renée, who conquers life by a will to do her duty, makes clear his reason for placing the novel from the start and permanently in the "Scènes de la vie privée," in which it holds an important position.

The opening pages of *Une Fille d'Ève*⁵⁸⁶ are taken up with a discussion on the education of the two sisters, Marie-Angélique and Marie-Eugénie de Granville. Again Balzac is preoccupied with "la vie de famille," or, as he calls it, "la zone domestique," in which grows up Marie-Angélique de Vandenesse, the heroine of *Une Fille d'Ève*. Young, with a romanesque

⁵⁸³ The story, first published in *Le Siècle*, May-June, 1842, entered the subdivision under discussion in the same year. It appeared as a complement to *La Muse du département*, together with *Un Drame au bord de la mer* and *Père Canet* in 1843, in 2 vols. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. III.

⁵⁸⁴ *Fur.*, I, 417.

⁵⁸⁵ This novel was first published in *La Presse*, November, 1841—January, 1842. The same year it appeared in 2 vols., published by Souverain. Next it entered the "Scènes de la vie privée" (*Comédie humaine*, éd. Furne), Vol. XI; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. I.

⁵⁸⁶ This tale first appeared in *Le Siècle*, December, 1838—January, 1839; next it was published by Souverain, together with *Massimilla Doni*, in 2 vols., in 1839; in 1842 it entered the "Scènes de la vie privée" (*Comédie humaine*), Vol. II. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

imagination, without experience, she is completely ignorant of the world about her. The novelist gives the minutiae of her narrow education, watched over by a devout and despotic mother, and shows how inadequate it is to meet the problems of social life. Married to a man of the world much older than herself, and somewhat neglected by him, she becomes attracted to a Bohemian type of journalist, Raoul Nathan, a man of vulgar taste, whom she innocently believes to be a genius. Her husband, however, realizing the situation, saves her from a foolish passion by skilfully presenting the false lover in his true light. This, as a narrative of youthful folly, fits logically into the grouping of the "Scènes de la vie privée," for which it was intended from its conception. Although the tale was not written until 1838, Balzac wrote to Mme Hanska in 1833 that "*Une Fille d'Ève* ... sera le type de la *Femme abandonnée* prise entre quinze et vingt ans";⁵⁸⁷ and in 1834 he indicated its place in the first subdivision of the "Études de mœurs";⁵⁸⁸ finally in 1839 he asserted: "*Les Scènes de la vie privée* eussent été moins complètes sans l'ouvrage principal de la présente publication, *Une Fille d'Ève*."⁵⁸⁹

It has been shown previously that *Autre Etude de femme*⁵⁹⁰ was made up of six separate episodes; they are unified by the idea of infidelity in love or in marriage. This theme is in harmony with those in the first subdivision of the "Études de mœurs." It is true, however, that only a few of these episodes have been consistently placed in the subdivision; others underwent shiftings to the "Scènes de la vie de province" but, ultimately assembled under the title *Autre Etude de femme*, were permanently classified in the subdivision under consideration. Although the setting in all the component parts is not clear cut, the fact remains that all deal with family life and problems; therefore, Balzac rightfully placed his composite story in the "Scènes de la vie privée."

The novelist frankly stated in a letter to Mme Hanska⁵⁹¹ that, although the subject had really been suggested by George Sand, nevertheless in *Béatrix*⁵⁹² he had portrayed some of his own friends. The novel, laid in

⁵⁸⁷ *LEt.*, I, 6.

⁵⁸⁸ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 197.

⁵⁸⁹ *OD.*, III, 518.

⁵⁹⁰ This novel was partly dealt with above, pp. 51, 53-56, 58; see also Canfield, art. cit., XLVIII, 498.

⁵⁹¹ *LEt.*, I, 464, 527.

⁵⁹² Parts I and II of the novel first appeared in *Le Siècle*, April-May, 1839; in January, 1840, the novel was announced in the *Bibliographie de la France* and was published

Brittany, is to a great degree the story of Calyste du Guénic, without whom, Balzac said, "*Les Scènes de la vie privée* auraient manqué un type essentiel, celui du jeune homme dans toute sa gloire, offrant à la fois beauté, noblesse et sentiments purs."⁵⁹³ He is the central character, presented as a youth, lover, husband, father, and finally as the lover of Béatrix. In three young men—Calyste, Albert Savarus, and Thaddée Paz (in *La Fausse Maîtresse*)—Balzac described the experiences of first love, a theme which he assigned from the start to the *Scènes de la vie privée*. Consequently, the three novels in which these characters figure form an integral part of that subdivision. Another aspect which calls for this classification is the author's claim that "sans Béatrix, l'auteur aurait oublié de peindre les sentiments qui retiennent encore les femmes, après une chute."⁵⁹⁴ Furthermore, in 1839 he stated that the two novels, *Béatrix* and *Une Fille d'Ève*, would, for good reason, greatly advance *Les Scènes de la vie privée*.⁵⁹⁵

Since *Béatrix* appeared as a separate publication in close conjunction with the Furne edition, it was, from the beginning, intended as a *scène* in the *Comédie humaine*, and so included the necessary links in continuity and solidity.⁵⁹⁶ Another point is the change in chapter titles to demonstrate exact sociological intent.

The theme of *Modeste Mignon*⁵⁹⁷ was suggested by Mme Hanska.⁵⁹⁸ Soon after its publication Balzac wrote: "Il y a des gens qui commencent à dire que M[odeste] Mi[gnon] est un chef-d'œuvre."⁵⁹⁹ It is one of his few novels which end happily, and is a charming scene of private life where common sense and peace prevail. The theme, one of Balzac's favorites, is that the best security in married happiness is a "mariage de raison." The plot recalls that of Cyrano and Roxane, with the difference that Modeste, guided by her father and a devoted friend, Butscha, recognizes

by Souverain in 2 vols. In 1842 the two parts entered the "Scènes de la vie privée," Vol. III. Part III first appeared in *Le Messager*, December, 1844—January, 1845; in 1845 it was published by Chlendorowski in 2 vols.; the same year Part III entered the "Scènes de la vie privée," Vol. IV. The complete novel is now in *Con.*, Vol. V.

⁵⁹³ *OD.*, III, 536, Preface to *Béatrix*.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 524.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ See above, p. 125.

⁵⁹⁷ This novel first appeared in *Le Journal des débats*, April, May, July, 1844; the same year it was published, together with *Un Episode sous la Terreur* and *Une Passion dans le désert*, by Roux and Cassanet in 4 vols. In 1845 the story entered the subdivision in question, and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

⁵⁹⁸ *LEt.*, II, 321, 325, 331.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

in time her true lover, Ernest de la Brière, a man of integrity and positive virtues.

Balzac's letters show that he meditated for a long time on the classification of this novel. On March 17, 1844, he wrote: "[*Modeste Mignon*] sera la dernière *Scène de la Vie privée*, dans l'ordre et le classement définitif des idées que chacune présente. C'est la lutte entre la poésie et le fait, entre l'illusion et la société; c'est le dernier enseignement avant de passer aux scènes de l'âge mûr."⁶⁰⁰ Aside from this clear statement, there are several unmistakable indications that *Modeste Mignon* is a "drame" and a "scène domestique," in which the minutiae of private life hold the interest. Balzac keenly analyzes Modeste's "amour platonique si rare, si peu compris, la première illusion des jeunes filles, le plus délicat de tous les sentiments."⁶⁰¹ Again, the following passage illustrates his method of harmonizing the tales with the main ideas formulated in the Preface to the first edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée." Ernest de la Brière, writing to Modeste, pleads for common sense: "Destinée à la vie bourgeoise, obéissez à la loi de fer qui maintient la société ... Croyez-moi, pour une fille, comme pour une femme, la gloire sera toujours d'enfermer dans la sphère des convenances les plus serrées, ses ardents caprices."⁶⁰² Further methods of interlocking his works at that time are Balzac's allusions by content and title to *Le Lys dans la vallée*, to *L'Interdiction*, and to *L'Enfant maudit*.⁶⁰³

In *Honorine*⁶⁰⁴ the novelist again says, in answer to the problem of passion in marriage, that "le mariage exclut la passion." Octave de Bauvan, because of the infidelity of his romantic wife, seeks consolation in excessive work. Later, after Honorine's sincere repentance and expiation, he forgives her, but she cannot forget her sin; it is, as Balzac says, "un cas de conscience conjugale" which gradually undermines her health and brings death. Incidentally, the author pleads for the rehabilitation of the penitent woman.

There was no hesitation in the classification of this tale. On January 17 Balzac wrote: "*Honorine* est supérieure au *Message*, à la *Femme abandonnée*, et à tout ce que j'ai taillé sur ce patron."⁶⁰⁵ The last two narra-

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶⁰¹ *Fur.*, IV, 152.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-54.

⁶⁰⁴ The novel first appeared in *La Presse*, March, 1843; in 1844 it was published, together with *Un Prince de la Bohême*, by De Potter in 2 vols.; finally, in 1845, it entered the category under consideration. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. IV.

⁶⁰⁵ *LEt.*, II, 100.

tives were classified in the "Scènes de la vie privée"; it is fitting, therefore, that *Honorine* should be permanently placed in the same category.

Concerning *Un Début dans la vie*,⁶⁰⁶ the author wrote on April 17, 1843, to Mme Hanska: "Il y a bientôt un an que *Mistigris* est fait. ... Cela se trouvera dans le quatrième volume des *Scènes de la vie privée* ... sous le titre de: *un Début dans la vie*."⁶⁰⁷ The original title, *Mistigris*, meaning a "dabbler in colors," a nickname imposed upon Léon de Lora by the studio of Schinner,⁶⁰⁸ was not in harmony with the general theme of the "Scènes de la vie privée." The subject was suggested by Laure Surville under still another title, *Les Jeunes Gens*. The present title, however, is better suited to the category and the theme, which is the beginning of Oscar Husson's career, and, moreover, points to the sociological importance of the story.⁶⁰⁹ The interesting description of the picturesque "coucou," Pierrotin's stage-coach, shows a part of the life of that period, 1822; the evolution in the social scale is demonstrated by the rapid rise of the bailiff Moreau, who becomes a deputy; and the law offices, clerks, and Oscar's private life in his poverty-stricken but decent home all form parts of the environment now paramount in the novelist's mind. The principal theme concerns the errors of the youthful Oscar Husson, who insists on leading a romantic life and who commits a series of foolish mistakes; the secondary theme is the family tragedy of De Sérisy. These two aspects definitely align the tale with the "Scènes de la vie privée," where it was permanently classified. With this tale we conclude our discussion of the nine new stories in the fifth edition of the "Scènes de la vie privée" and proceed to the analysis of the second subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*.

The "Scènes de la vie de province," third edition (1843-44), had thirteen titles (the three parts of *Illusions perdues* are counted separately). Of these, five had been published previously and eight (counting separately Parts II and III of *Illusions perdues*) were new. Brunetière⁶¹⁰ maintains that no artist has depicted life in the provinces of France, between 1830 and 1850, with a more universal quality than Balzac. The novelist

⁶⁰⁶ This fiction first appeared in *La Législature*, July-September, 1842, under the title *Le Danger des mystifications*; in 1844, under the present title, it was published, together with *La Fausse Maîtresse*, by Dumont in 2 vols. In 1845 it entered the subdivision under discussion, and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. II.

⁶⁰⁷ *LEt.*, II, 138, letter dated April 7, 1843, continued on successive days.

⁶⁰⁸ *Con.*, II, 344.

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. another story of the same category, where a nickname used as a title, *La Fleur-des-pois*, is changed to one having a social bearing, *Le Contrat de mariage*.

⁶¹⁰ *Balzac*, p. 101; cf. also Wenger, *op. cit.*

felt, however, in 1844 that even with these eight new novels his portrayal of the provinces still lacked a "tableau d'une ville de garnison frontière, celui d'un port de mer, celui d'une ville où le théâtre est une cause de désordre, et où les comédiens et les comédiennes de Paris viennent faire leur récolte."⁶¹¹ This new project was an enlargement of that of 1839,⁶¹² but neither plan was ever carried out. As in the case of the "Scènes de la vie privée," Balzac's objectives in the "Scènes de la vie de province" have already been discussed.⁶¹³ It suffices now to recall briefly the main intentions to portray: (1) mature people; (2) their material outlook on life; (3) the limited sphere of intrigue in the provinces, as contrasted with the metropolis. In this light we proceed to analyze the themes and the classifications of the new stories.

In *Ursule Mirouët*,⁶¹⁴ as in *La Rabouilleuse*, of the same category, Balzac is interested in the question of inheritance. This interest is to be found in one of his *Œuvres de jeunesse*, *L'Héritière de Birague* (1822), and possibly originated in some experience during his apprenticeship in a lawyer's office. In a fragmentary manuscript at Chantilly, *Les Héritiers Boirouge, ou Fragments d'histoire générale*,⁶¹⁵ a projected chapter bears the title "Ursule Mirouët." *Les Héritiers Boirouge*, although listed in the catalogue of 1845 as Part II of *Les Rivalités*, was never completed. Its theme of inheritance, however, was utilized in the novel *Ursule Mirouët*.

The author calls Ursule a "sœur heureuse"⁶¹⁶ of Eugénie Grandet, since, like Eugénie, she is wooed by several suitors for her fortune; but, unlike Eugénie, she is finally happily married. The fact that a swarm of greedy cousins quarrel over her inheritance and plot against the young girl stamps the main theme as a "lutte des intérêts matériels," which is set against the background of the monotony of provincial life. It is appropriate, therefore, that *Ursule Mirouët* be classified, together with *Eugénie Grandet*, in the "Scènes de la vie de province."

In *Pierrette*,⁶¹⁷ with its martyrdom plot, Balzac continues the study of

⁶¹¹ *OD.*, III, 569.

⁶¹² Cf. above, pp. 126-27.

⁶¹³ See above, pp. 90, 97.

⁶¹⁴ This novel first appeared in *Le Messager*, August-September, 1841; in 1842 it was published by Souverain in 2 vols.; in 1843 it entered the subdivision now discussed. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. VIII.

⁶¹⁵ *Lov. Coll.*, A 167, fols. 214-48. See above, p. 127.

⁶¹⁶ *LEt.*, II, 67.

⁶¹⁷ This story first appeared in *Le Siècle*, January, 1840; the same year it was published, together with *Pierre Grassou*, by Souverain in 2 vols.; in 1843 the tale became Part I of *Les Célibataires* and entered the subdivision under consideration; the novel is now in *Con.*, Vol. IX.

celibacy begun in *Le Curé de Tours* (1832). Sylvie Rogron, an abnormally jealous and cruel spinster, tracks to death her victim, Pierrette, as Troubert did François Birotteau. Here, again, Balzac gives voice to his somewhat persistent hatred of "tout être improductif," such as he created in Silvie Rogron, whose only motive in life is the persecution of the pretty, melancholic orphan. Since the provincial intrigues and rivalries in this novel equal those of *Eugénie Grandet* and of *Ursule Mirouët*, it is logically classified with them in the "Scènes de la vie de province."

Les Célibataires forms the collective title for three separate stories: Part I, *Pierrette*, just analyzed; Part II, *Le Curé de Tours*,⁶¹⁸ Part III, *La Rabouilleuse*. Of the last, Balzac wrote, October 29, 1842: "C'est la troisième histoire de[s] *Célibataires* et avec *L'Abbé Troubert*⁶¹⁹ et *Pierrette*, cela complète ce que je voulais écrire sur le célibat."⁶²⁰ Balzac changed the title of this novel twice before he decided on *La Rabouilleuse*. Such shifting of titles betrays a doubt in the author's mind as to which was the leading character.

Part I of *La Rabouilleuse*, *Les Deux Frères*,⁶²¹ deals with the brothers Philippe and Joseph Bridau. Part II, *Un Ménage de garçon en province*,⁶²² seems to stress the celibacy of Philippe. The two parts under the title of Part I came out in book form in 1843, published by Souverain in two volumes. The same year, but under the title of Part II, *Un Ménage de garçon*, and designated as the third series of the *Célibataires*, the novel was classified in the "Scènes de la vie de province."⁶²³ Balzac indicated the present title, *La Rabouilleuse*, in his plans⁶²⁴ for the second edition of the *Comédie humaine*. Nevertheless, during the same period he announced the novel under a fourth title, *Le Bonhomme Rouget*. Each of these titles points to a separate theme in the story: the first and second have been explained; in *La Rabouilleuse* the interest is shifted from the two brothers to Flore Brazier. The term "rabouilleuse" designates a person who stands over a stream and frightens the fish in order to catch them more easily. Flore was seen doing that. In *Le Bonhomme Rouget* the spotlight is focused on

⁶¹⁸ See above, pp. 61 ff.

⁶¹⁹ One of the projected titles of *Le Curé de Tours*.

⁶²⁰ *LEt.*, II, 73.

⁶²¹ This part first appeared in *La Presse*, February-March, 1841.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, October-November, 1842.

⁶²³ *Fur.*, Vol. VI; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. IX.

⁶²⁴ Lov. Coll., A 297, fol. 56; A 159, fols. 14-15.

the imbecile Rouget, whose wealth is coveted by the unscrupulous Philippe and by the tyrannical Flore and her criminal lover, Maxence Gilet. All these characters are celibates, at least during a good part of the action.

Balzac indicated the classification of the novel in a preface of 1840, in which he wrote: "*Le Bonhomme Rouget (un Ménage de garçon en province)* sera la troisième *Scène de la vie de province* où il [Balzac] essayera de peindre les malheurs qui attendent les célibataires pendant leur vieillesse."⁶²⁵ The setting and atmosphere of the small town made the tale distinctly one of provincial existence. Furthermore, in later editions the author inserted passages, mostly generalizations of a sociological nature, concerned with the lives and manners of provincials.

The other collective title in the third edition of the "Scènes de la vie de province" is *Les Parisiens en province*; this contained two stories: *L'Illustre Gaudissart*⁶²⁶ and *La Muse du département (Dinah Pièdefer)*.⁶²⁷ The latter is Balzac's second composite story (cf. *Autre Etude de femme*); here, besides the salon setting and the three episodes of vengeance—*Histoire du Chevalier de Beauvoir*, a summary⁶²⁸ of *La Grande Bretèche*, and *Le Grand d'Espagne*, discussed previously—are also passages from *La Femme de province*⁶²⁹ and from *Olympia, ou Les Vengeances romaines*.⁶³⁰ For practical reasons the first and third episodes had temporarily been utilized in the "Scènes de la vie privée"; but, since the setting and characters in both stories are essentially provincial, they now were permanently placed in the "Scènes de la vie de province" as parts of *La Muse du département*, in which they furnish the background for the life of Mme de la Baudraye.

Her life is the unifying thread in this composite tale; Mme de la Baudraye is the Balzacian Mme Bovary who, after a sincere repentance, is rehabilitated and returns to her provincial home and family. Although she lives for a while in Paris with the unworthy Lousteau, her life is closely

⁶²⁵ *OD.*, III, 546.

⁶²⁶ See above, pp. 100-101.

⁶²⁷ Partly discussed; see above, pp. 53, 101.

⁶²⁸ But *La Grande Bretèche* was given in full in the Souverain ed. of *La Muse du département* (1843). It could not be given in full in the subdivision under consideration because the whole episode became the conclusion in *Autre Etude de femme*, "Scènes de la vie privée" (1845), of the *Comédie humaine*.

⁶²⁹ This narrative first appeared in *La Province des français peints par eux-mêmes*, Vol. I (1840).

⁶³⁰ This story appeared under the title "Fragments d'un roman publié sous l'Empire par un auteur inconnu" in *Les Causeries du monde*, September, 1833.

bound to the provinces, where she was the "muse" of provincial talent. A passage in a letter to Mme Hanska throws light on the composition and placement of the novel. On March 2, 1843, the novelist wrote: "... le sixième volume de *la Comédie humaine*, *le Curé de Tours*, et un *Ménage de garçon* font, avec *l'Illustre Gaudissart*, vingt-deux feuilles, et comme il en faut trente, il s'ensuit qu'il faut un roman de la dimension d'*Une Fille d'Ève*⁶³¹ [a scene in the series of private life]." This statement recalls the earlier practical reasons given whenever the author was in want of material; but *La Muse du département*, with its provincial pattern despite "the Parisian influence,"⁶³² is truly the appropriate space-filler in the second category.

*Le Cabinet des antiques*⁶³³ appeared with *La Vieille Fille* under a collective title, *Les Rivalités*. On February 12, 1837, Balzac wrote that "*Le Cabinet des antiques* servira de clôture à *la Vieille Fille*."⁶³⁴ In his plans for a second edition of the *Comédie humaine* Balzac indicated that *Le Cabinet des antiques* was to be severed from its companion story and was to appear with a projected novel, *Jacques de Metz* (never written), under another collective title, *Les Provinciaux à Paris*; this caption points to a province-Paris axis as his objective. *La Vieille Fille*, however, was to remain with two projected novels, *L'Original* and *Les Héritiers Boirouge*, under *Les Rivalités*. Despite the fact that the proposed novels were never written, *Le Cabinet des antiques*, with its Parisian-provincial theme, is now *Les Provinciaux à Paris*, Part I. Both this collective title and the earlier *Les Rivalités* are adapted to our story, with its bitter rivalries between degenerating provincial aristocracy and the rising energetic bourgeoisie, together with the experiences of provincials in Paris.⁶³⁵ The title *Le Cabinet des antiques* also suggests ruined nobility, "les antiques," who rallied around the venerable Comte d'Esgrignon. Whether it be considered as a portrayal of provincial intrigues and quarrels or of provincials in the metropolis, it remains a typical tale of the "Scènes de la vie de province," in which it holds its legitimate position.

⁶³¹ *LEt.*, II, 120.

⁶³² Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁶³³ Part I of this novel, under the present title, appeared in *La Chronique de Paris*, March, 1836. Part II, *Les Rivalités en province*, was published in *Le Constitutionnel*, September–October, 1838; in 1839 both parts joined under the first title, together with *Gambara* (as a "filler"), were published by Souverain in 2 vols. In 1844 our novel was placed in the category under discussion; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XI. *Le Cabinet des antiques* was partly dealt with in connection with *La Vieille Fille*; see above, p. 102.

⁶³⁴ *LEt.*, I, 380.

⁶³⁵ See above, pp. 126 ff.

It is generally accepted that Mme de Mortsauf, the heroine of *Le Lys dans la vallée*,⁶³⁶ is modeled upon Mme de Berny and that Félix de Vandenesse represents, to some degree, the author himself. The novel, laid in the countryside near Tours, is a melancholy tale of struggle between passion and duty, and duty triumphs at the cost of the heroine's life.

Balzac's letters show that from the first he designed this novel for the last (rather than the second) subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*. On March 11, 1835, he wrote to Mme de Castries: "(*Le Lys dans la vallée*) ... sera la dernière scène des *Etudes de mœurs* comme *Séraphita* est la dernière *Etude philosophique*. Au bout de chaque œuvre se dressera la statue d'une image de la perfection sur la terre, d'abord, puis dans le ciel, n'est-ce pas une grande idée."⁶³⁷ Consequently, the Introduction of April, 1835, gives the classification of the novel in the "Scènes de la vie de campagne." Davin-Balzac states that in "*Le Lys dans la vallée* se retrouvent, à un degré peut-être supérieur, les qualités du *Médecin de campagne*,"⁶³⁸ which belonged to the same series; Balzac himself confirmed that classification in 1839.⁶³⁹ In spite of these definite assertions, the author was forced, for practical reasons,⁶⁴⁰ to place the novel temporarily in the "Scènes de la vie de province." On November 14, 1843, he complained to Mme Hanska that Volume VII (now under consideration) of the *Comédie humaine* lacked "quinze feuilles";⁶⁴¹ on February 28, 1844, he continued: "Je me décide à finir le tome VII de la *Comédie humaine* avec *Le Lys dans la Vallée* qui, certes, peut passer pour une *Scène de la Vie de Province*."⁶⁴² Seemingly he is not convinced that the novel is a provincial scene, but uses it to complete the volume. Later, however, on the flyleaf of his own copy of the corrected Furne edition, Balzac stated: "*Le Lys dans la vallée* sera rapporté aux *Scènes de la vie de campagne*."⁶⁴³ There is little justification for placing the novel in the provincial scenes.⁶⁴⁴ On the other hand, the

⁶³⁶ The first instalment of this novel was published in *La Revue de Paris*, November-December, 1835. The complete novel was published by Werdet in 1836, 2 vols.; in 1839 it was published by Charpentier in 1 vol. In 1844 *Le Lys dans la vallée* appeared in the subdivision under discussion; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXVI.

⁶³⁷ "Cahiers balzaciens," VI, 34. Cf. *LEt.*, I, 237.

⁶³⁸ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 49.

⁶³⁹ *OD.*, III, 522.

⁶⁴⁰ Cf. Marc Blanchard, *La Campagne et ses habitants dans l'œuvre de Honoré de Balzac*, p. 33.

⁶⁴¹ *LEt.*, II, 225.

⁶⁴³ *Lov.* Coll., A 21.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

typically rural episodes of vintage and harvest carry out the author's intentions to depict rustic occupations in the fields.⁶⁴⁵ Moreover, the heroine, in whom he claimed to have attained "terrestrial perfection,"⁶⁴⁶ definitely belongs among those "plus purs caractères"⁶⁴⁷ destined for the last category. For these reasons the novel is better adapted to the themes of the "Scènes de la vie de campagne" than to those of the "Scènes de la vie de province."

Un Grand Homme de province à Paris and *Ève et David*, respectively Parts II and III of *Illusions perdues*, although new in this edition of the subdivision, have been dealt with earlier in this study,⁶⁴⁸ in connection with Part I of the trilogy. In Part II, Balzac deals with literary movements in Paris; hence its title, *Un Grand Homme de province à Paris*—that is, Lucien, the poet, and his relations with men of letters and with journalists. In the Preface to Part II the novelist says: "... le talent de province a contre lui la vie de province, dont la monotonie fait aspirer tout homme d'imagination aux dangers de la vie parisienne."⁶⁴⁹ *Illusions perdues*, as a whole, fittingly concludes the "Scènes de la vie de province" and logically leads to the third subdivision of the "Études de mœurs," the "Scènes de la vie parisienne."

Balzac's intentions for the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," given in his introductions and prefaces (ending with 1839), have already been dealt with in this study.⁶⁵⁰ For the sake of clarity we recapitulate. The main points are: (1) the approach of old age; (2) the type of the social climber; (3) the passions, vices, and abuses as dissolving social principles; and (4) Parisian life versus the provincial. It is pertinent now to see what new theories, if any, have been developed by the novelist since 1839 concerning the third subdivision of the "Études de mœurs."

In the *Avant-propos* Balzac recast his earlier statements in regard to this category, in which he now asserted "se rencontrent à la fois l'extrême bien et l'extrême mal."⁶⁵¹ By 1844 he had enlarged his picture of Parisian life by adding *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. He maintained, nevertheless, at that time that his portrayal of Paris was not yet complete; in order to achieve his task, he asserted in this Preface that the descriptions of "le palais de justice, le monde du théâtre, et le monde des

⁶⁴⁵ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 48.

⁶⁴⁶ *LEt.*, I, 237.

⁶⁴⁷ *Avant-propos*, p. xxxvii. Cf. *OD.*, III, 549. The conception of character had a bearing on the classification of the novel.

⁶⁴⁸ See above, p. 102.

⁶⁵⁰ See above, p. 105.

⁶⁴⁹ *OD.*, III, 534.

⁶⁵¹ *Con.*, I, xxxvi.

savants”⁶⁵² should be added. Of these projects, the second, “le monde du théâtre,” was actually realized in *Splendeurs et misères*. The first and third remained unfinished. Guided by these objectives, we shall now analyze the new stories in the “Scènes de la vie parisienne,” third edition (1843-46).

It contained seventeen titles, of which six (*Histoire des Treize*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *Facino Cane*, *La Messe de l’athée*, *Sarrasine*, and *L’Interdiction*) had previously appeared and eleven (counting the three episodes of the *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* as one novel) were new.

A statement in Balzac’s notebook indicates the subject of *Le Père Goriot*:⁶⁵³ “Un brave homme—pension bourgeoise—600 fr. de rente—s’étant dépouillé pour ses filles qui toutes deux ont 50.000 fr. de rente, mourant comme un chien.”⁶⁵⁴ This is the gist of the poignant tale of Goriot, the French King Lear, in which, the author said in 1835, he intended to “saisir la paternité dans tous les plis de son cœur, de la peindre tout entière.”⁶⁵⁵ And in *Le Père Goriot*, so Balzac wrote to Mme Hanska, he presented a man “qui est père comme un saint, un martyr est chrétien.”⁶⁵⁶ Balzac punished this excess of paternal love, carried to a degrading idolatry, by making his hero a monomaniac abandoned by his children, dying wretchedly and alone.

There was some doubt in the author’s mind concerning the classification of the novel which, although published in book form in 1835, was not, until 1843, placed in the “Scènes de la vie parisienne” in which Le Breton says it was “si bien à sa place.”⁶⁵⁷ The entire action, laid in Paris, the truly Parisian characters, the age and tragedy of Goriot—all tenets of Balzac’s theory for the category—justify the classification of the novel in the third subdivision. However, in accordance with his directions for a definitive edition of the *Comédie humaine*, the story was later and permanently classified with the other tales (*La Vendetta*, *Le Bal de Sceaux*, *Une Double Famille*) of paternal love in the “Scènes de la vie privée.” Balzac’s

⁶⁵² *OD.*, III, 575. Italics Balzac’s. Cf. *LEt.*, II, 301.

⁶⁵³ The novel first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*, December, 1834—January–February, 1835; the same year two editions were published by Werdet and Spachman, as well as a reprint by Werdet in 4 vols.; in 1839 *Le Père Goriot* was published by Charpentier in 1 vol.; in 1843 it entered the subdivision under discussion; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. VI.

⁶⁵⁴ *Pensées, sujets, fragmens*, éd. Crépet, p. 114.

⁶⁵⁵ *OD.*, III, 417.

⁶⁵⁶ *LEt.*, I, 195. Italics Balzac’s.

⁶⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

reasons for reclassification of *Le Père Goriot* may be explained by similarity of theme rather than by background and characters. This shift, it may also be argued, emphasizes the private lives of the leading characters. As in *Le Lys dans la vallée*, so in *Le Père Goriot*, the pattern is not clearly exclusive but might fit in either category. The pro and con are a matter of individual emphasis.

The origins of the *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau*⁶⁵⁸ may be found in a letter from Dr. Nacquart, dated November 23, 1830. He answers a query of Balzac concerning the care of the skin and ends his letter by saying, "... j'ai voulu vous donner des matériaux,"⁶⁵⁹ a combination of medical and cosmetic information that Balzac used later in this novel.

The first mention of the title and brief allusions to the book occur in the author's correspondence⁶⁶⁰ with Mme Carraud in the letters of September 17 and October 5, 1833. He began *César Birotteau* (as he stated later⁶⁶¹) in April, 1834, at Frapesle; from there he wrote to Mme Hanska: "... je fais une œuvre capitale, *César Birotteau*, le frère de celui que vous connaissez, victime comme son frère, mais victime de la civilisation parisienne, tandis que son frère n'est victime que d'un seul homme. Ce sera plus grand, plus vaste que ce que j'ai fait jusqu'alors."⁶⁶² Like his brother, François, César is naïve in all social matters except business; he was temporarily successful in his "petit commerce parisien" but could not cope with the intrigues and the dishonesty of the "fauves" and the "reptiles" of the great business world of Paris; he fell prey to the metropolitan jungle. Concerning the character of César, Balzac wrote much later, in 1846, to Hippolyte Castille:

J'ai conservé *César Birotteau* pendant six ans à l'état d'ébauche, en désespérant de pouvoir jamais intéresser qui que ce soit à la figure d'un boutiquier assez bête, assez médiocre, dont les infortunes sont vulgaires et symbolisent ce dont nous nous moquons beaucoup, le petit commerce parisien. Eh bien, monsieur, dans un jour de bonheur, je me suis dit: "Il faut le transfigurer, en en faisant l'image de la *probité*."⁶⁶³

⁶⁵⁸ This novel was first published by the Bureau du Figaro, December, 1837, in 2 vols.; in 1839 it was reprinted by Charpentier, and in 1844 it entered the subdivision under consideration; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XIV.

⁶⁵⁹ "Cahiers balzaciens," VIII, 2-5.

⁶⁶⁰ *Corr. Carraud*, pp. 168, 176.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 276, letter dated January, 1837.

⁶⁶² *LEt.*, I, 149, letter dated from Frapesle, April 10, 1834.

⁶⁶³ *OD.*, III, 365. Italics Balzac's. Letter dated October 11, 1846.

César, who showed much fortitude in all his misfortunes, the "type parfait du négociant probe ... ne soutient pas la joie et la vie."⁶⁶⁴ His sudden emotion upon regaining his honest name kills him; and Balzac concludes the novel: "Voilà la mort du juste!"

According to Balzac's announcement (September, 1834) on the verso cover page of the *Etudes de mœurs*, Volume III, and an earlier agreement with Werdet (July 16-19, 1834), this novel was to come out in the *Etudes philosophiques* (January, 1835). It was stated in the Werdet document:

M. de Balzac aurait ainsi l'obligation de compléter le nombre de vingt volumes, dont rigoureusement doivent se composer les *Etudes Philosophiques*, par cinq volumes d'œuvres inédites, sous le titre de l'*Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau, marchand parfumeur, adjoint au maire du deuxième arrondissement de la ville de Paris*. Ces cinq volumes formeront la quatrième livraison de l'œuvre.⁶⁶⁵

This publication was postponed first to March, 1835, then to 1836, and finally to 1837, to appear in the fifth *livraison* (Vols. VI-X⁶⁶⁶), with an addition in the title "chevalier de la Légion d'honneur"—perhaps to emphasize the hero's rising grandeur. The printing of the work really began in 1834-35 but was left unfinished. Subsequently a few of the proof sheets, set up for the *Etudes philosophiques*, were found and used later for the publication of the novel by *Le Figaro* in two volumes, in December, 1837 (dated 1838). In this, however, the story was designated as a "nouvelle scène de la vie parisienne." The new classification is by far more justifiable, since the composition carries out Balzac's expressed intentions for the category in which, Davin said, "les calculs s'y font au grand jour et sans pudeur, l'humanité n'a plus que deux formes, le trompeur et le trompé, ... l'honnête homme est un niais ... tout s'exploite, tout se débite."⁶⁶⁷

César Birotteau is par excellence the social document among Balzac's novels; here the group idea is foremost: the business world, the financiers, Birotteau's relatives and friends—many interlocking social classes—all characteristic of Parisian life. Most of the variations occur in the exposition and in the *dossiers* of the characters; a number of them (as seen above) offer generalizations about social categories, types, bourgeois,

⁶⁶⁴ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 204.

⁶⁶⁵ Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, art. cit., *RHL*, 1907, p. 400.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 410-11, 424, 434. These delays were caused by the liquidation of Werdet's business.

⁶⁶⁷ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 47.

artists, etc.; the author's emphasis, therefore, is consistently on the *étude de mœurs*, as illustrated in the capital.

*La Maison Nucingen*⁶⁶⁸ had been first announced as *La Haute Banque*, a title which, although not unsuitable, was never used. It was possibly too general, whereas the present title is more specific. Nucingen, whom Balzac likens to a "loup-cervier," is a motor-force in the Parisian financial world, of whom P. Barrière aptly said: "... l'habileté criminelle ... jointe au sens pratique réussit, et donne à un malhonnête homme l'apparence de l'honneur tandis que Birotteau a l'apparence du déshonneur."⁶⁶⁹ Balzac refers to Nucingen and his henchmen as "ces spirituels *condottieri* de l'industrie moderne"⁶⁷⁰ whose obscure speculations bring them millions and peerages but inflict ruin on the public. This dishonest situation falls in line with the author's objective for the category, to portray the "deceiver and the deceived." In both novels he shows a profound knowledge of bankruptcy and speaks of *César Birotteau* and *La Maison Nucingen* as "born twins."⁶⁷¹ Since these novels represent two sides of Parisian life in which the integrity of César is contrasted with the craftiness of the "fauve" Nucingen, they are rightfully given an important position in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne."

*Pierre Grassou*⁶⁷² is a short composition in which Balzac depicts the life and work of a mediocre painter who caters to the public taste; his persistence and hard work bring him financial success but not the satisfaction of a true artist. Guided merely by common sense and not by the passionate genius of Gambara or of Frenhofer, Pierre does not belong to the same category of philosophic artists; and therefore the narrative, of which the setting and spirit are of the French capital, is appropriately classified in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" rather than in the "Etudes philosophiques." Balzac showed, however, some hesitancy in the classification of the tale, for in the catalogue (1845) he listed it temporarily in the "Scènes de la vie privée."⁶⁷³ A reason for the projected shift may be

⁶⁶⁸ This novel, together with *La Femme supérieure* and *La Torpille*, was published by Werdet in 1838, in 2 vols.; in 1844 it entered the subdivision under consideration. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XIV.

⁶⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 109-10.

⁶⁷⁰ *Fur.*, XI, 2.

⁶⁷¹ *OD.*, III, 496.

⁶⁷² This tale first appeared in *Babel*, a collection by several authors published in 1840, in 4 vols. The same year it appeared, together with *Pierrette*, in 2 vols., published by Souverain. In 1844 the sketch entered the subdivision under discussion; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVI.

⁶⁷³ See also *Lov. Coll.*, A 27.

seen in the youth and occupation of Grassou, which recall Mistigris in *Un Début dans la vie* of the first subdivision. Far more significant, however, is the presentation of the typical Parisian atelier, of expositions, of the shrewd art-dealers, together with the episode of the *crise ministérielle*, May, 1839—these motifs, essentially those of the capital, recommend the story for a permanent position in the “Scènes de la vie parisienne.”

*Les Secrets de la princesse de Cadignan*⁶⁷⁴ is an “étude de femme” and recalls *La Duchesse de Langeais*, except that the princess is, as Balzac calls her, a “Célimène amoureuse.”⁶⁷⁵ Her lover, the poet Daniel d’Arthez, is, to a large degree, Balzac himself. The first rather general title, *La Princesse parisienne*, was changed in 1844 to *La Princesse de Cadignan*, which is more specific. The background of this character sketch—the Faubourg Saint-Germain after the July Revolution, the social set of the Parisian salon and its intrigues; the crafty, worldly heroine, a typical Parisian coquette who personifies, as the author says, “le dernier degré de la dépravation dans les sentiments”⁶⁷⁶—these aspects harmonize with the standard pattern of the “Scènes de la vie parisienne,” in which the tale was permanently grouped.

In *Les Employés, ou La Femme supérieure*⁶⁷⁷ Balzac is preoccupied with administrative reforms; he endeavors to discover the cause and the effect of bureaucratic procedure, proposes to simplify the governmental machine, and seeks to improve the position of the employees. In this idealistic program the honest M. Rabourdin failed; a man of integrity like César (the hero of another Parisian scene), he also plays into the hands of his unscrupulous rivals, Baudoyer and Des Lupeaulx. Miss Scott⁶⁷⁸ clearly shows how the author’s lengthy additions and insertions, borrowed from *La Physiologie de l’employé* (1841) and *Les Petits Bourgeois* (still unpublished in 1844), had shifted the interest from the official’s capable wife to that of the bureaucratic group. Consequently, the *feuilleton* title, *La*

⁶⁷⁴ This story first appeared in *La Presse*, August, 1839, under the title *La Princesse parisienne*; retaining the same title, it was included in *Le Foyer de l’opéra*, a collective work by several authors published by Souverain in 1840. In 1844, under the present title, it entered the category under consideration; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVI.

⁶⁷⁵ *LET.*, I, 519.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁷ This novel first appeared as *La Femme supérieure* in *La Presse*, July, 1837. In 1838 it was published by Werdet, together with *La Maison Nucingen* and *La Torpille*, in 2 vols. In 1844, under the present title, it entered the third category; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XIX.

⁶⁷⁸ Art. cit., *MP*, XXIII (1926), 315–36.

Femme supérieure (Mme Rabourdin) was no longer suitable for the Furne edition of the story, and the more precise *Les Employés* was adopted. Since in this novel Balzac has realistically depicted political, administrative, and financial Paris, it remains an indispensable part in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne."

*Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*⁶⁷⁹ is composed of four parts, of which only three appeared in the Furne edition of the *Comédie humaine*. It is logical, however, that the last part, although not included in the novel until 1855, should be considered under the present caption, since it was listed as Part IV of the novel in the catalogue of 1845. In this immense "fresco" Balzac assembled his created world of men of letters and of law, of financiers, politicians, and magistrates. In addition to these are here revealed, so he said in the Preface, "les existences, dans toute leur vérité, des espions, des filles entretenues et des gens en guerre avec la société qui grouillent dans Paris."⁶⁸⁰ When the novelist was reproached for introducing such types, he stated in self-defense, "mais il faut faire Paris vrai,"⁶⁸¹ and claimed that the novel was composed of "détails profondément vrais, pour ainsi dire historiques."⁶⁸² For the sake of truth, he continued, he had undertaken "l'analyse et la critique de la Société dans toutes ses parties"; consequently, he was obliged to portray "ces figures si curieuses, de la courtisane, du criminel, et de leurs entourages."⁶⁸³

The idea of rise and fall suggested in the title *Splendeurs et misères*

⁶⁷⁹ Of Part I, *Comment Aiment les Filles*, a fragment, *La Torpille*, was published by Werdet, together with *La Femme supérieure* and *La Maison Nucingen*, in 1838, in 2 vols. The remainder of *La Torpille*, with a large section of Part II, *A combien l'Amour revient aux vieillards*, appeared in *Le Parisien*, May-July, 1843, under the title *Esther, ou Les Amours d'un vieux banquier*; it was composed of three sections, to which Balzac soon added a fourth. De Potter published the whole under the present title in 1844, in 3 vols. The same year the novel entered the third category, under the present title: Part I, *Esther heureuse*; Part II, retaining its first title; Part III, *Où Mènent les Mauvais Chemins*; this part was first published in *L'Epoque*, July, 1846, as *Une Instruction criminelle*. In 1847 it was published by Souverain under the title *Un Drame dans les prisons*, together with *Esquisse d'homme d'affaires (Les Roueries d'un créancier)*. Part IV, *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*, first appeared in *La Presse*, April-May, 1847, and the following year was published, by Chlendowski, with *Les Martyrs ignorés* and *Une Rue de Paris et son habitant*, in 3 vols. In 1855 Part IV entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVIII, a supplementary volume published by Houssiaux (see above, p. 132). The four parts are now united under the collective title *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, Con., Vols. XV-XVI.

⁶⁸⁰ OD., III, 575.

⁶⁸² OD., III, 576.

⁶⁸¹ LET., I, 175.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., pp. 576-77.

(cf. *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau* of the same category) is itself a key to the classification of the novel, with its interwoven plots and intrigues all typical of the capital. Moreover, in the character of Vautrin is presented the archcriminal of the underworld in his true environment of rascals and courtesans. The death scene of Esther savors the degradation to which life may sink in the great metropolis. Marcel Barrière⁶⁸⁴ maintains that the *Splendeurs et misères* is the outstanding work of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." It forcibly illustrates the "extrêmes de Paris qui dissolvent incessamment les principes sociaux,"⁶⁸⁵ and fulfils the author's expressed intention for the third subdivision.

The three compositions to be considered next are short sketches each affording a glimpse of the *mœurs parisiennes* through the characterization of a definite type. The first of these, *Un Prince de la Bohème*,⁶⁸⁶ recalls Balzac's early salon stories, except that here the tale is read instead of being told. Its original title, *Les Fantaisies de Claudine*, was too narrow, for it stressed only the whims of Claudine; the new caption, *Un Prince de la Bohème*, is far better suited to its contents and the social category portrayed. Through the idle, adventurous life of La Palferine, one of the "jeunes gens" of the *Comédie humaine*, Balzac acquaints the reader with the social set in the cafés on the Boulevard des Italiens. The Parisian *boulevardiers*, with their meaningless existence *à la bohème*, properly belong to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," in which our sketch was classified from the start.

Esquisse d'homme d'affaires d'après nature,⁶⁸⁷ like the preceding tale, characterizes another member of the "jeunes gens," Maxime de Trailles. It is a clever sketch, depicting the trickery of Maxime's creditor, Cérizet, which explains the first title, *Les Roueries d'un créancier*. When finally,

⁶⁸⁴ *L'Œuvre de Honoré de Balzac*, p. 157.

⁶⁸⁵ *OD.*, III, 392.

⁶⁸⁶ This short story, under the title *Les Fantaisies de Claudine*, first appeared in *La Revue parisienne*, August 25, 1840; in 1844, under its present title, it was published, together with *Honorine*, by De Potter, in 2 vols. In 1846 it entered the category under consideration; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVIII.

⁶⁸⁷ This tale was first published in *Le Siècle*, September, 1845, under the title *Les Roueries d'un créancier*, as chap. iii of a series, *Études de mœurs*. In 1846, entitled *Esquisse d'homme d'affaires d'après nature*, it entered the category under discussion. In 1847, retaining the same title, it completed Vol. II of *Un Drame dans des prisons* (Part III of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*), published by Souverain. The tale under a new title, *Un Homme d'affaires*, is now in *Con.*, Vol. XVIII.

in 1846, the tale was classified in the third subdivision, Balzac bestowed on it the second title, which involves a larger sociological group and is more in keeping with the author's growing scheme. The sketch, however, is not listed in the catalogue of 1845, for the simple reason that it had not yet been written. In 1846 the novelist, while revising Volume XI⁶⁸⁸ of the *Comédie humaine*, wrote on the back of the inside cover of the book a third caption, *Un Homme d'affaires*. In this he gained brevity but still retained the connotation of the title in the first edition. The character of Maxime de Trailles, the Parisian dandy, and of his crafty creditor, together with the atmosphere of the *demi-mondains*, is a true "étude de mœurs" in the capital and plays an important part in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," in which it was ultimately classified.

Gaudissart II,⁶⁸⁹ the last sketch, presents the type of the perfect salesman; in him Balzac personified "la passion des vendeurs." It is a comic skit of a few pages in which is shown how Gaudissart II is more successful in a Parisian shop than was L'Illustre Gaudissart in Touraine. Although the sketch was not included in the catalogue of 1845, it remains in the corrected Furne edition⁶⁹⁰ as part of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," where it was logically and permanently classified.

The last story in Volume IV of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," *Les Comédiens sans le savoir* (*Le Provincial à Paris*),⁶⁹¹ portrays an additional scene in the life of provincials in Paris.⁶⁹² It is comic in nature and offers an effective contrast to the tragedy of *Un Grand Homme de province à Paris*, Lucien de Rubempré of *Illusions perdues*. Gazonal, the country-

⁶⁸⁸ Lov. Coll., A 28.

⁶⁸⁹ First appeared in *La Presse*, October 12, 1844, under the title *Un Gaudissart de la rue Richelieu; les Comédies qu'on peut voir gratis*. It also appeared in *Le Diable à Paris*, a collective work by several authors published by Hetzel in 1844-46, in 2 vols. In 1846, under its present title, it entered the subdivision under discussion; it is now in *Con.* Vol. XIX.

⁶⁹⁰ Lov. Coll., A 25 and A 28.

⁶⁹¹ This story first appeared in *Le Courrier français*, April, 1846; the same year it entered the third category. In 1848 it was reprinted under the title *Le Provincial à Paris*, together with *Gillette* (*Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*), *Le Rentier*, and *El Verdugo*. Three episodes of the story appeared separately: *Un Espion à Paris: Le Petit Père Fromenteau, bras droit des gardes du commerce* and *Une Marchande à la toilette, ou Madame Ressource* in *Le Diable à Paris*, published by Hetzel in 2 vols., in 1845-46, in the series *Les Comédies qu'on peut voir gratis à Paris*; *Etude de mœurs: II, Le Luther des chapeaux*, in *Le Siècle*, August, 1845.

⁶⁹² Cf. *Les Provinciaux à Paris: Le Cabinet des antiques*.

man, comes to the capital to settle a lawsuit. There his cousin, Léon de Lora, a painter, and Bixiou act as *ciceroni*. With Gazonal the reader is taken on a tour into the "infernal regions" of Paris; here Balzac presents a gallery of metropolitan portraits, the "Comédiens sans le savoir": the barber, the haberdasher, the hatter, the usurer, the fortune-teller, the concierge, the police spy, the politician—they all mystify and amuse our provincial, who, after winning his case, returns to his province more informed and completely convinced of the superiority of the metropolis.

A proposed title, *Les Comiques sérieux* (listed in the catalogue of 1845), and the one used in 1848, *Le Provincial à Paris*, as well as the present and final title, are all appropriate, for each points to a specific aspect of the narrative. These secondary Parisian types and the true Parisian milieu demand the classification of *Les Comédiens sans le savoir* in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," in which the story retained its position permanently.

With this story ends our discussion of the original four volumes of the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" (Furne ed.). In 1848, however, Balzac published a supplementary,⁶⁹³ a fifth, volume of the series, which should logically, despite chronology, be considered under the same caption as the first four.

This supplementary Volume XVII of the *Comédie humaine* contained the twin novels *La Cousine Bette* and *Le Cousin Pons*, under the collective title *Les Parents pauvres*.⁶⁹⁴ This work, written in June, 1846, and published in October, 1847, belongs to the last creative period of our novelist, during which he portrayed his characters with extreme realism, bordering on naturalism, monomania, and even pathology in the case of Bette. The first, a novel of several themes, centers around a poor relative, Bette, who endeavors to bring about the ruin of her cousin, Adaline, despite the fact that she has been kindly treated by the family. Her motivation is vengeance born of unrestrained envy and pettiness. *Le Cousin Pons*, the second novel, is a complement and contrast to the first. Pons, too, is a poor relation, but one who is humiliated and despised by his wealthy kin. A simple soul, like François Birotteau (of the same category), Pons is beset

⁶⁹³ See above, p. 132.

⁶⁹⁴ The original title of the diptych was *Histoire des parents pauvres*; it appeared in the *Constitutionnel*: *La Cousine Bette*, October–December, 1846, and *Le Cousin Pons* (the projected title was *Les Deux Musiciens*), March–May, 1847. The two novels were joined in book form and published by Chlendorowski and Pétion in 1847–48, in 12 vols. In 1848 they entered, with their present titles, the subdivision under consideration. The two stories are now in *Con.*, Vols. XVII, XVIII.

by "les petits vices," especially by *gourmandise*; to satisfy this weakness he gradually becomes a parasite in the homes of his well-to-do relatives. He has, however, a master-passion which, noble in itself, has effected his complete ruin—namely, his love of art and the uncontrollable mania of a collector. His collection is the true heroine of the story and the love of his heart. During his illness his persecuting family learns the value of the art museum, joins the cohorts of rival art-dealers and shysters, and abets the rapacious concierge, La Cibot. Piece by piece, they despoil him of his treasures.

Balzac proposed to change not only the original collective title, *Histoire des parents pauvres*, but also the subtitle of the second novel. First it was *Le Bonhomme Pons*;⁶⁹⁵ next it became *Le Vieux Musicien*, who is, Balzac says, "le parent pauvre accablé d'injures, plein de cœur." *Le Cousin Pons*, *La Cousine Bette*, and *Pierrette*, continues Balzac, "constitueront *L'Histoire des parents pauvres*."⁶⁹⁶ Still another proposed title, *Les Deux Musiciens*, was on June 28, 1846, replaced by *Le Parasite* and designated as "le titre définitif."⁶⁹⁷ When this, however, was not approved by Mme Hanska, the author decided on the present title, *Le Cousin Pons*, which implies a clearer connection with its companion, *La Cousine Bette*. Each of the rejected titles reveals his indecision as to which aspect of Pons's character most completely harmonizes with the theory in the third category. *Le Cousin Pons* suggests kinship and the greedy expectation of inheritance,⁶⁹⁸ a feature of Parisian life, which Balzac intended to portray in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne."

The title of *Les Parents pauvres* indicates, furthermore, a social category within which Balzac opposes contrasting characters: Pons and his faithful friend Schmucke, innocent martyrs, symbolize the "extrême bien"; the Marville family—La Cibot, Rémonencq, and Bette—personify the "extrême mal," another objective in the author's general design for the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." The facts that the theme of young love holds a very minor role (Hortense and Wenceslas in *La Cousine Bette*) and that the work is essentially a study of vicious and cruel Parisian life in all social levels align the novels logically in the third subdivision of the *Etudes de mœurs*.

⁶⁹⁵ *LEt.*, III, 254.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 256. See above, p. 142, on *Les Célibataires: Pierrette*.

⁶⁹⁷ *LEt.*, III, 281.

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. Lov., *Hist.*, p. 47.

The last three categories⁶⁹⁹ of the "Études de mœurs": "Scènes de la vie politique," 1846, "Scènes de la vie militaire," 1845, and "Scènes de la vie de campagne," 1845, had had no previous publications; therefore the titles were not used as subdivisions until 1845, although much earlier Balzac indicated the "Scènes de la vie politique" and the "Scènes de la vie militaire" as collective titles (May 8, 1830).⁷⁰⁰ Of the six categories, these remained the least developed, even though their pattern was distinctly outlined by the author. For our purposes it seems advisable (1) to consider them as a group, (2) to discover Balzac's intentions for each, (3) to follow up his realization in individual stories, and (4) on such bases to discuss the pro and con of the classifications.

It should be recalled that all three categories were announced as a group in the Davin-Balzac introductions, 1834 and 1835, respectively, at which time they were designed in general to depict "les spectacles atroces mais pompeux des masses sociales luttant entre elles ... la vie et les intérêts incarnés dans quelques hommes chargés d'en prévoir les nécessités et de mettre aux prises les individus entre eux. Ce seront les *Scènes de la vie politique* et les *Scènes de la vie militaire*."⁷⁰¹ The last category, Davin-Balzac continued, was to portray the haven for the "débris des hommes brisés par la politique, par la guerre et par les orages de la vie." These statements show that the author was no longer particularly interested in individuals but in personalities representative of the masses and nations. His general objective in the last three categories was a study of antagonism between large groups of people. Apparently the author planned a greater number of novels for these subdivisions than he actually completed. On May 10, 1840, he wrote to Mme Hanska that he had yet to compose "*les Scènes de la vie politique et les Scènes de la vie militaire*, deux portions bien longues et bien difficiles. Il me faudra pas moins de six années de travaux pour en venir au bout."⁷⁰² The work advanced slowly, for in September, 1841, he reported: "Quant aux *Scènes de la Vie politique, militaire et de campagne*, il en manque les deux tiers, et je dois tout avoir fini en sept ans, sous peine de ne jamais faire la *Comédie humaine*."⁷⁰³

Balzac's specific intentions⁷⁰⁴ for the "Scènes de la vie politique" were (1) to consider political issues and dictatorial power after the Revolution;

⁶⁹⁹ Partly dealt with; see above, pp. 91 ff.

⁷⁰⁰ See above, p. 34.

⁷⁰² *LET.*, I, 537.

⁷⁰¹ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 198.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 565.

⁷⁰⁴ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, pp. 48-49; *Avant-propos*, p. xxxviii.

(2) to portray the will of the majority symbolized by the elected; (3) to depict organized power, the administration versus individual liberty. We shall now see to what degree he realized these purposes in the stories eventually placed in the category.

Besides the four actually published, other compositions were planned for the first edition of the "Scènes de la vie politique." To repeat, *Les Conversations*⁷⁰⁵ were intended to open the category because, the author explained, "elles forment une transition naturelle entre la peinture des extrêmes de Paris ... et ... des *Scènes de la vie politique*, où l'homme se met au-dessus des lois communes, au nom des intérêts nationaux."⁷⁰⁶ This project, as stated above, was not carried out, and *Les Conversations* did not enter the category.

*Un Episode sous la Terreur*⁷⁰⁷ became ultimately the opening scene of the subdivision. This is a short narrative, written in 1830, to which Balzac gave a historical background. Here the monarchy is represented by the priest and two nuns, while the Revolution and the action of the masses are personified by the executioner of Louis XVI; the executioner seeks comfort and forgiveness in a Mass held secretly in an attic by the priest in hiding. The idea of one man as expressing the voice of a people harmonizes with the author's design for the "Scènes de la vie politique"; therefore the tale holds rightfully a significant place in the category.

Bellessort⁷⁰⁸ maintains that in *Une Ténébreuse Affaire* Balzac utilized the secrets of the imperial police communicated to him by his friend, Mme d'Abrantès. This view is confirmed by the author's statement that the story "est une œuvre ... vraie comme événement, et vraie comme détail."⁷⁰⁹ The action is based upon a historical fact, the kidnapping of Senator Clément de Ris, in September, 1800, although Balzac has changed the time and place of the event. This incident has been discussed by G. Lenôtre in *Histoires de police et d'aventures*,⁷¹⁰ where it is shown that

⁷⁰⁵ See above, p. 52.

⁷⁰⁶ *OD.*, III, 392, Preface, 1835.

⁷⁰⁷ The *Episode* first appeared anonymously as an introduction to the *Mémoires de Sanson sur la Révolution française*, published by Mame et Delaunay in 2 vols., 1829. The tale had also appeared in *Le Cabinet de lecture*, January-February, 1830. In 1842, in a somewhat modified form, the story was published in the *Royal Keepsake* under the title *Une Messe en 1793*; in 1844-45 it completed Vol. IV of *Modeste Mignon*, published by Roux et Cassanet. In 1846 the story entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XII; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXI.

⁷⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁷⁰⁹ *LET.*, II, 132. See also *OD.*, III, 559.

⁷¹⁰ Published by Flammarion in 1936. Cf. G. Mongrédien, "*Une Ténébreuse Affaire*," *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, December 26, 1936.

Malin de Gondreville, in Balzac's story, was modeled upon Clément de Ris. The title of the novel was appropriate, for the real kidnapping remained for a long time a "ténébreuse affaire." Corentin and Peyrade, who personify the imperial police, claim to avenge society, while in reality they avenge their personal pride. Malin de Gondreville stands for the opportunist politician who, like a chameleon, changes with every regime. *Une Ténébreuse Affaire* is an important political and social document in its disclosure of the corrupt relations between the police and high government officials of France from 1803 to 1806, and so was correctly classified as an essential part of the "Scènes de la vie politique."

The origin of *Z. Marcas*⁷¹¹ may be found in a jotting of Balzac's notebook: "Pour les *Scènes de la vie politique*. Un homme d'Etat agissant pour le pays et pour lui. Un pauvre diable pour sa famille, les mêmes scènes en bas et en haut. Le ministre a une statue, l'artisan est au bain. Intituler. *Les Deux Extrêmes*."⁷¹² This specific work was never published, but the subject was treated in our story, where Marcas, an ambitious young man, a born statesman, is exploited by a mediocre but successful minister. Of the hero the author observes: "Il avait cru voir la trahison au cœur du pouvoir, non pas une trahison palpable, saisissable, résultant de faits; mais une trahison produite par un système, par une sujétion des intérêts nationaux à un égoïsme."⁷¹³ Despite his high ideals, Marcas falls a victim to corrupt politics; and in his person the novelist criticizes the French government, before the revolution of 1848, for not utilizing the young and talented generation of that period. From its first conception Balzac designed this tale for the "Scènes de la vie politique," because in every detail are illustrated his declared objectives for the category.

The last story of this series, *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*,⁷¹⁴ con-

⁷¹¹ This sketch was published in the first number of the *Revue parisienne*, August 25, 1840; in 1841, under a new title, *La Mort d'un ambitieux*, it appeared in *Le Fruit défendu*, a collection by several authors; in 1846 the tale entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XII; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXI.

⁷¹² *Pensées, sujets, fragmens*, éd. Crépet, p. 115.

⁷¹³ *Fur.*, XII, 432.

⁷¹⁴ Two episodes of Part I of this novel appeared in September, 1842, and September, 1843, in *Le Musée des familles*; the first episode was entitled *Les Méchancetés d'un saint*, and the second, *Madame de la Chanterie*; under the same title a third episode was published in October and November, 1844, in the same journal. These three fragments, united under a common title, *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine (premier épisode)*, entered in 1846 the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XII. This part, under a new title, *La Femme de soixante ans*, together with *L'Enfant maudit*, *L'Epicier*, *Le Notaire*, and *La Femme de*

sists of two episodes: I, *La Femme de soixante ans* (*Madame de la Chanterie*), and II, *L'Initié*; although the latter was not added until 1855, it should logically be dealt with in the present period. A. Prioult⁷¹⁵ states that the source of Part I of our novel is to be found in *Sophie, ou L'Enfant volé*, published by L. Legay, 1822. Balzac's hero, Godefroid, seems to be modeled upon De Meran, the hero in *Sophie*. Godefroid, who lacked a motive in life, under the inspiration of practical evangelism became active in good works and was finally initiated into the secret band dedicated to a service of kindly deeds. The fundamental theme of the whole novel is charity combating misery and transforming the lives of men.

But there is a broader aspect from which the work may be considered. In 1844 Balzac explained that he was preparing

comme contre-poids et comme opposition, un ouvrage où se verra l'action de la vertu, de la religion et de la bienfaisance au cœur de cette corruption des capitaux, et c'est une œuvre à la fois si longue et si difficile, qu'il y a bientôt trois ans qu'il y travaille sans pouvoir la terminer. *Les Méchancetés d'un saint et la Baronne de la Chanterie* sont deux fragments extraits de cet ouvrage (*l'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*), formidable de vertus et où chacun pourra compter les misères affreuses sur lesquelles repose la civilisation parisienne.

En commençant les *Scènes de la vie parisienne par les Treize*, l'auteur se promettait bien de les terminer par la même idée, celle de l'association faite au profit de la charité, comme l'autre au profit du plaisir.⁷¹⁶

It is, then, designed as a contemporary novel depicting a humanitarian phase of Parisian life, and as such the story is now classified in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." In harmony with this final arrangement and remaining in the same category, it is so listed in the catalogue of 1845. Nevertheless, in 1846 Part I was temporarily used as the concluding story of the "Scènes de la vie politique." On the basis of certain ideas and episodes the novel could pass for a political scene. In it Balzac condemns the Civil Code; the police episodes recall the Chouannerie;⁷¹⁷ M.

province, was published by Roux et Cassanet in November, 1847, in 3 vols. In 1854, retaining the same title, the story was published by De Potter in 1 vol. Part II, although announced as *Les Frères de la consolation*, appeared as *L'Initié* in the *Spectateur républicain*, in August–September, 1848. Together with *El Verdugo*, it was published by De Potter in 2 vols., 1854. In 1855, *L'Initié*, as Part II of our story, entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVIII, published by Mme Houssiaux. The whole novel is now in *Con.*, Vol. XX.

⁷¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁷¹⁶ *OD.*, III, 575–76, Preface to *Splendeurs et misères*.

⁷¹⁷ The novel is linked with *Les Chouans* through the brother of Alphonse de Montauran, M. Nicolas, one of the "Frères de la consolation."

de Bourlaci's death sentence and Mme de la Chanterie's speech of forgiveness are both, in essence, political episodes. Although these elements commend the story as a logical transition to the political scenes, far more significant are the truly Parisian setting and characters. The picture of the capital would have been neither true nor complete without the charity work which was then (after the Romantic period) taking root. The humanitarian aspect is, in fact, a feature of contemporary Parisian life. With this novel we conclude our discussion of the fourth category and shall now turn to the fifth of the "Études de mœurs."

Despite the fact that the "Scènes de la vie militaire" continuously occupied the mind of Balzac from 1829 or even earlier, they remain the least developed of the "Études de mœurs." The general design was given in the Davin-Balzac Introduction⁷¹⁸ already dealt with. The author intended to portray the masses led "en marche pour se combattre"; and consequently, as he said, he had to describe "les mœurs d'une armée, ... d'un champ de bataille, ... le choc de la France et de l'Europe, ... le trône des Bourbons, que veulent relever dans la Vendée quelques hommes généreux, ... l'émigration aux prises avec la République dans la Bretagne, ... la nation tantôt triomphante et tantôt vaincue."⁷¹⁹ In 1839⁷²⁰ Balzac accentuated his purpose—the details of military life will be personified, he said, in historical men, "dont l'histoire ne tiendra jamais compte." And in the *Avant-propos* he explained that society will be shown "dans son état le plus violent"; nevertheless, he regretted, at that time, that the series was still the least complete portion of his work. In his dedication of *Les Deux Frères* Balzac disclosed further features designed for the subdivision. He wrote "Assez de beaux caractères, assez de grands et nobles dévouements brilleront dans les *Scènes de la vie militaire*."⁷²¹ Again in his letters he alluded to the projected series which would entail a journey to the battlefields of Germany and of Austria.⁷²² An analysis of the military tales will presently show which of these objectives were ultimately carried out.

The title of the fifth subdivision of the "Études de mœurs," like the fourth and the sixth, had had no publication previous to this issue except for the fact that the phrase had been used as a collective volume title for a

⁷¹⁸ See above, pp. 91, 157.

⁷¹⁹ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 48.

⁷²⁰ OD., III, 525, Preface to *Une Fille d'Ève*.

⁷²¹ *Les Deux Frères*, éd. Souverain (1842), I, iii.

⁷²² *LEt.*, I, 537, 544, 569, and *passim*; II, 288, 340, and *passim*; III, 26.

projected work of which only one extract, *El Verdugo*,⁷²³ had been published in 1830.

Of the two stories actually published in the series under consideration, *Une Passion dans le désert*⁷²⁴ has been dealt with earlier in our study. We now pass directly to the discussion of the second, *Les Chouans, ou La Bretagne en 1799*.⁷²⁵ There are two themes in this historical novel: the royalist insurrection in Brittany of 1799 and the love of Marie de Verneuil for "le Gars," the Marquis Alphonse de Montauran. Together with his followers, chiefly Breton peasants, Montauran represents the royalist front as opposing the republican. Through a police intrigue he loses both his cause and his life. In the background of the actual revolt, as well as in the historical incident and characters,⁷²⁶ Balzac definitely realized some of his intentions. As a tableau of the civil war in the nineteenth century the novel is in keeping with Balzac's design for the series in which it was legitimately classified in 1845; together with *Une Passion dans le désert* it forms an integral part of the unfinished "Scènes de la vie militaire."

Although the title of the sixth and last subdivision of the "Etudes de mœurs," the "Scènes de la vie de campagne," was mentioned by Balzac as early as November, 1833,⁷²⁷ it had previously been used neither as a volume title nor as a subdivision. To the author's plans in regard to this series, discussed earlier in this study, should now be added a more specific statement of design. He purposed to portray: "... les hommes froissés par le monde, par les révolutions, à moitié brisés par les fatigues de la guerre, dégoûtés de la politique. Là donc le repos après le mouvement, les paysages après les intérieurs, les douces et uniformes occupations de la vie des champs après le tracas de Paris ... les idées religieuses, la vraie philanthropie, la vertu sans emphase."⁷²⁸ In the *Avant-propos* Balzac again extended his objective to include, he said, "les plus purs caractères

⁷²³ See above, pp. 34, 43-44.

⁷²⁴ The shifting of this story from the "Etudes philosophiques" to the "Scènes de la vie militaire" has been discussed and justified above, p. 118.

⁷²⁵ Partly dealt with; see above, p. 27. This novel was published in 1829, under the title *Le Dernier Chouan, ou La Bretagne en 1800*, by Urbain Canel, in 4 vols.; in 1834 it was published, under its present title, by Vimont in 2 vols.; in 1836, by Werdet. In 1845 the story entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIII; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXII. For a complete history of publication and variations, see Barnes, *op. cit.*; and Dargan, Crain, and Others, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-65.

⁷²⁶ Dargan, Crain, and Others, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 ff.

⁷²⁷ *LEt.*, I, 91.

⁷²⁸ *Lov.*, *Hist.*, p. 48.

et l'application des grands principes d'ordre, de politique, de moralité." By this he meant that in the last category he would declare his faith in a social order, in politics and ethics. All these tenets are to be symbolized by characters, setting, and action. A discussion of the novels placed in the category at that time will reveal the concrete expression of the author's ideas and so warrant the classification.

The first edition of the series contained *Le Médecin de campagne* and *Le Curé de village*.

Le Médecin de campagne,⁷²⁹ together with *Les Chouans*, is among Balzac's notable productions; the latter opened the way to fame, and during the composition of the former he conceived the idea of reappearing characters. He spoke of *Le Médecin de campagne* as his "œuvre de prédilection"⁷³⁰ and hoped it would win him "le prix Montyon."⁷³¹ The political, economic, social, and religious ideas in this novel are, in large part, expressed by the author's spokesman, Benassis, the country doctor, mayor, and benefactor of the community, through whose life and work Balzac shows the efficacy of philanthropy and demonstrates that in order to improve men one must better their milieu. The novel is essentially a sociological study but contains some military episodes, the most important of which is the "Napoléon du peuple." Upon the basis of such passages, it may be argued, *Le Médecin de campagne* might be classified in the "Scènes de la vie militaire"; and had this subdivision been completed, probably these episodes, as well as others, dispersed in various novels, would have been parts of the military series. But in our novel the military passages are incidental to the narrative, which is essentially concerned with the social reforms brought about by the country doctor. In 1840⁷³² Balzac indicated the story as a scene in the last subdivision of the "Etudes de mœurs" in which it was classified in 1846 and of which it forms a component part. For in this novel, as well as in the next, the author developed certain ideas on religion and social reforms designed, as stated above, particularly for the "Scènes de la vie de campagne."

⁷²⁹ This novel first appeared in September, 1833, in 2 vols., published by Mame-Delaunay; the 2d and 3d eds. were published by Werdet in 1834 and 1836, respectively; in 1839 Charpentier reprinted it in 1 vol. In 1846 the novel entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIII; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXIV.

⁷³⁰ *LEt.*, I, 24.

⁷³¹ *Corr. Carraud*, p. 82. Cf. Surville, *op. cit.*, p. 201. See also Bouteron, "Balzac et le prix Montyon," *RDM*, XVIII (December 15, 1933), 927.

⁷³² *LEt.*, I, 536.

In the Preface to the first edition of *Le Curé de village*⁷³³ Balzac stated that this novel, a "pendant" to the one just discussed, contained "l'application du repentir catholique."⁷³⁴ Here we find the practical idealist, Abbé Bonnet, aided by Véronique Graslin and others, undertaking and achieving the material and moral regeneration of the inhabitants of the wretched village, Montégnac. Bonnet suggests to the unhappy Mme Graslin that she use her wealth for the irrigation of the countryside of Montégnac in order to fertilize the plateau and to transform for the better the lives and the morale of the villagers. Véronique Graslin, therefore, in seeking expiation of her own sin, becomes the benefactress of the people.

There was no doubt in Balzac's mind concerning the classification of this novel; from the start it was destined for the "Scènes de la vie de campagne." On June 2, 1839, he wrote that the work "sera beaucoup plus élevé, plus grand, plus fort que *Le Lys dans la vallée* et que *le Médecin de campagne*,"⁷³⁵ both classified in this subdivision.⁷³⁶ The country setting, a few rural characters and their occupations, together with the religious and philanthropic ideas in *Le Curé de village*, fully justify its inclusion in the category. With this novel we conclude our discussion of the "Etudes de mœurs au XIX^e siècle," first division of the *Comédie humaine* (Furne ed.), and shall now pass to the second main division, the "Etudes philosophiques."

In comparison with the "Etudes de mœurs," just discussed, there was very little development or new material in the "Etudes philosophiques"; of the twenty-two titles comprised in the division, only one was new, *Le Martyr calviniste*.⁷³⁷ Although the last to be written, this work became Part I of *Sur Catherine de Médicis*. The earlier title of this episode, for which three *feuilles* were actually set up by Charles Plon, was *Un Martyr*.⁷³⁸ It was, however, successively announced as *Le Pelletier de la reine*, *Le Fils du pelletier*, *Les Lecamus, ou Catherine de Médicis prise au piège*,⁷³⁹ but finally published as *Les Lecamus*. Even this was ultimately changed

⁷³³ This story first appeared in *La Presse*, January 1-7, June 30-July 13, and July 30-August 1, 1839. It was published in book form, May, 1841, by Souverain in 2 vols.; in 1845 the novel entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XIII; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXV.

⁷³⁴ *OD.*, III, 547.

⁷³⁵ *LEt.*, I, 513, 536.

⁷³⁶ *Le Lys dans la vallée* was added later.

⁷³⁷ This episode first appeared as *Les Lecamus* in *Le Siècle*, March 23-April 4, 1841.

⁷³⁸ *Lov. Coll.*, A 281, fols. 300, 305.

⁷³⁹ *Lov., Hist.*, p. 186. See also *Con.*, XXX, 398; Crain, *op. cit.*, pp. xix-xxvi.

to *Le Martyr calviniste* in the Souverain edition of the complete novel. Each of these titles has a direct bearing on the contents, which deal with the conspiracy of Amboise, with the part played in it by Catherine, and with the life of the young Calvinist, Christophe Lecamus, the son of the queen's furrier.

In 1843, when the three parts of the novel were assembled under the general title *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, Balzac added an "Introduction," in which he pointed out Catherine as the unifying *fil*, and thereby justified the title of the book. Here, also, as well as in a letter to Mme Hanska, he stated the purpose of the work. He wrote: "Je viens d'achever une petite étude, intitulée *Le Martyr*, qui avec *Le Secret des Ruggieri* et *Les Deux Rêves*, me complète l'étude du caractère de Catherine de Médicis."⁷⁴⁰ Balzac's interest in Catherine's complex nature is obvious in the "Introduction"; the whole novel is, indeed, an explanation and a defense of the queen and her policy of absolute monarchy. Although the classification of this novel has been previously discussed on the basis of *Les Deux Rêves* and *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, it is well to add the following passage from the author's notebook:⁷⁴¹

19 X^{bre} 1836. Résolu d'introduire dans les *Etudes philosophiques*, autant de scènes historiques qu'il y a de siècles depuis l'invasion des Francs jusqu'en 1800, pour montrer le ravage des hautes idées de la politique, ce qui a fait l'esprit des siècles, l'antagonisme, et cela dans les proportions du *Secret des Ruggieri*. Environ 15 scènes. *Les Ruggieri* seront complétés par *Les deux Rêves*, dans l'édition future.

This jotting and a letter to Mme Hanska⁷⁴² give the reasons for placing a historical work in the "Etudes philosophiques." Moreover, the "Introduction" contains a further reason for the classification; Balzac says: "Si ce travail se trouve parmi les *Etudes philosophiques*, c'est qu'il montre l'esprit d'un temps et qu'on y voit clairement l'influence de la pensée."⁷⁴³ Catherine's *idée-fixe*—the absolute power of royalty, with its Machiavelian politics; the egoism of power, the prime motive of all her life and actions—is the underlying philosophical principle in the novel. This is a good reason and justifies the inclusion of *Sur Catherine de Médicis* in the second main division, where the story rightfully holds a significant place.

Balzac conceived and announced in 1834, as stated above, the idea of

⁷⁴⁰ *LEt.*, I, 399, letter dated May 28, 1837.

⁷⁴¹ Ed. Crépet, p. 138.

⁷⁴² *LEt.*, II, 134.

⁷⁴³ *Fur.*, XV, 478.

grouping all his novels under three captions; the realization, necessarily slow, was carried out between 1842 and 1848. Consequently, the third and concluding section of the *Comédie humaine*, the "Etudes analytiques," the least developed and articulated of the three, was here added. Its general line of thought had been indicated, as for the first two main divisions, in the Davin-Balzac Introduction;⁷⁴⁴ and no new purpose was enunciated in the *Avant-propos*. Nonetheless, this part was not written without a somewhat elaborate earlier preparation.

The analytical essays⁷⁴⁵ concurrent with the publication of the *Physiologie du mariage* show a definite kinship with this work and with the author's intentions for the division. Here, through their exterior manifestations, as Davin-Balzac stated, were sought the hidden principles of human nature. Hence, a significant title was projected, *Le Traité de la vie extérieure*, of which, according to Balzac, fragments had already been published. The other title projected for the division, at that time (1834), was *La Monographie de la vertu*.⁷⁴⁶ From these announced works and from a number of short compositions published between 1830 and 1831⁷⁴⁷ we conjecture that Balzac planned a series of "physiologies" and "pathologies." Although this assumption seems fully warranted, the present writer has nowhere found a specific statement by Balzac in regard to such a series. These short essays, sometimes alluded to as "traités," or "codes," were to fill the "Etudes analytiques," for which the author was ostensibly now apprenticing himself. They indicate a search for the human nature hidden by outward appearances, and a consequent interest in physiognomy, gait, and manners, in so far as these reveal to Balzac the inner life of man.

Planned only on these broad lines, the division contained at the time of the author's death but one work,⁷⁴⁸ *Physiologie du mariage*,⁷⁴⁹ published anonymously in 1829. Curiously enough, there exists a preoriginal of this work, bearing no title. It is bound in a volume with *Histoire de la*

⁷⁴⁴ See above, p. 88.

⁷⁴⁵ See above, p. 28.

⁷⁴⁶ Lov., *Hist.*, p. 206. Neither of these works was published.

⁷⁴⁷ See above, p. 28.

⁷⁴⁸ The second composition added to this division later is analyzed in Sec. VII.

⁷⁴⁹ Partly discussed above, pp. 28-29. This work was first published anonymously in December, 1829, by Levavasseur and Canel. In 1834, signed by the author, it was published by Ollivier in 2 vols.; and in 1838 by Charpentier in 1 vol.; in 1846 it entered the *Comédie humaine*, Vol. XVI; and it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXXII.

rage, written by B.-F. Balzac, father of the novelist, and printed in 1826-27.⁷⁵⁰ The *Physiologie* is not a novel; instead it is a satire on marriage and a sociological analysis of passion in its diverse manifestations. In keeping with his objective for the division, the author seeks to establish the principle that legal equality between husband and wife should be the basis of the family. The various reasons for this principle were shown in the "Etudes philosophiques," and the effects were illustrated in the "Etudes de mœurs." It should now be obvious, if not before, that the *Physiologie* logically belongs to the "Etudes analytiques," in which it was ultimately classified. With this division we close the fourth period of Balzac's literary career and complete our discussion of the first edition of the *Comédie humaine*.

It is now pertinent to summarize the chief points of advance in the fourth period: (1) in this serial publication, *La Comédie humaine*, the one inclusive general title, is used for the first time; (2) "Etudes analytiques," the third main division, is added to the original "Etudes de mœurs" and "Etudes philosophiques"; (3) new works are included and new dispositions of novels are also made. The "Etudes de mœurs" in the Furne had sixty-one titles, of which thirty-five were new;⁷⁵¹ nine in the first category, eight in the second, eleven in the third, four in the fourth, one in the fifth, and two in the sixth. An explanation of the counting is necessary: the three parts of *Illusions perdues* are counted separately, but those of *Histoire des Treize* and *Splendeurs et misères* are considered as one novel.

The "Etudes philosophiques" comprised in the original *Comédie humaine* twenty-two titles, of which only one was new; the three episodes of *Sur Catherine de Médicis* are counted separately.

The "Etudes analytiques," as has just been shown, contained only one title; therefore the grand total of novels in the sixteen volumes of the first edition of the *Comédie humaine* was eighty-four, of which thirty-seven were new. Among these we note the following shifts. To the "Scènes de la vie privée" were restored: (1) *La Bourse*, *Une Double Famille*, and *Gobseck*, after a temporary placement in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," from which also came *Madame Firmiani* and *Etude de femme*, both originally of the philosophical tales; (2) *Le Message* and parts of *Autre Etude de femme*, after a temporary classification in the "Scènes de la vie de province," from which were also added *La Grenadière* and *La Femme*

⁷⁵⁰ Prioult, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-22.

⁷⁵¹ That is, they had not been previously classified in the subdivisions.

abandonnée. To the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" were shifted *Facino Cane* and *La Messe de l'Athée*, both from the "Etudes philosophiques," Werdet edition. From the same division was moved *Une Passion dans le désert* to the "Scènes de la vie militaire." Therefore, during the fourth period there resulted, in all, twelve shifts; of these, five⁷⁵² were restored to the first category; seven were reclassified—six⁷⁵³ permanently and only one⁷⁵⁴ temporarily. This proportion is significantly small in comparison with the reclassifications that took place in the second period. This fact is a most convincing proof of his increasing control over the scheme. The publication of the first edition of the *Comédie humaine* is followed by the fifth and last period of Balzac's literary career.

VII. THE FIFTH AND FINAL PERIOD: 1845-50

In formulating final statements as to the novels included and their placement in Balzac's last arrangement of his *Comédie humaine*, it will be of value to recapitulate briefly the main points of the two preceding sections. Of these, Section V dealt with that period of expansion in Balzac's scheme which paved the way for the first edition of the *Comédie humaine*. This was the only complete edition published during the author's life and was discussed in Section VI. His creative vein continued, although with slower tempo, into his last years, so that later (1848-70) there were added eight compositions which will be noted or discussed in the first part of the present section. The second part will consider those projects of which only fragments or titles now remain, together with the final disposition of the novels.

Three of the eight novels in question were left unfinished⁷⁵⁵ and were published posthumously, but we shall discuss only those portions really written by Balzac. Although, for convenience, the chronological order of stories has usually been adopted in this study, nevertheless, logical order is given precedence wherever good sense dictates; consequently, four novels—*La Cousine Bette*, *Le Cousin Pons*, *L'Initié* (Part II of *L'Envers*

⁷⁵² *La Bourse*, *Une Double Famille*, *Gobseck*, *Le Message*, and *La Grande Bretèche* of *Autre Etude de femme*.

⁷⁵³ *Madame Firmiani*, *Etude de femme*, *La Grenadière*, and *La Femme abandonnée* in the "Scènes de la vie privée"; *Facino Cane* was moved to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; and *Une Passion dans le désert*, to the "Scènes de la vie militaire."

⁷⁵⁴ *La Messe de l'athée*.

⁷⁵⁵ *Les Paysans*, later completed by Mme Ève de Balzac; *Les Petits Bourgeois* and *Le Député d'Arcis*, completed by Charles Rabou. See below, pp. 169, 170, 171.

de l'histoire contemporaine), and *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*⁷⁵⁶ (tail end of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*)—have already been discussed under their appropriate classifications; therefore, there now remain only four stories to be analyzed.

Les Paysans,⁷⁵⁷ the first of the unfinished novels, was conceived, Balzac said,⁷⁵⁸ in 1837. In 1838 he composed⁷⁵⁹ Part I, *Qui terre a, guerre a*, and four chapters⁷⁶⁰ of Part II but published only Part I. Recognizing the completion of the work as a great task, he wrote: "Je ne me pardonnerai jamais de ma vie de m'être fourré dans *Les Paysans*."⁷⁶¹ According to Spoelberch de Lovenjoul⁷⁶² and M. Bouteron,⁷⁶³ it was his widow who completed the novel. The story is one of the obstinate attachment of the French peasants to the soil. A group of them, aided by the local small bourgeoisie, forced the landowner, M. Moncornet, to sell his large property by lots; here Balzac depicts the struggle between classes. The setting and the episodes of the narrative are definitely *campagnards*; the characters and their *mœurs* are predominantly rural, and on such a basis the story naturally belongs to the "Scènes de la vie de campagne," in which it was later classified as the author had directed.⁷⁶⁴ Marc Blanchard⁷⁶⁵ claims for Balzac the honor of having introduced into French literature "la campagne et ses habitants."

According to Balzac's letters,⁷⁶⁶ *Les Petits Bourgeois*,⁷⁶⁷ planned in 1839,

⁷⁵⁶ See above, pp. 155, 160, 152 ff. Since these novels were published in the supplementary Vols. XVII and XVIII, they are not counted in the above-given total of eighty-four novels but will be added later. See below, p. 172.

⁷⁵⁷ Part I (thirteen chapters) appeared in *La Presse*, December 3-12, 1844; Part II (first four chapters), in *La Revue de Paris*, April-June, 1855; the same year the two parts were published by De Potter in 5 vols. (*Bibliographie de la France*, 1855). Again, in 1855, the complete novel was published by Mme Houssiaux, in the supplementary Vol. XVIII (*Bibliographie de la France*, 1856). Next it appeared in OC., Vol. XIV. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXIII.

⁷⁵⁸ *LEt.*, II, 434, 453.

⁷⁶⁰ *Lov. Coll.*, A 175.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 488.

⁷⁶¹ *LEt.*, II, 471.

⁷⁶² *La Genèse d'un roman de Balzac: "Les Paysans."*

⁷⁶³ *Con.*, XXIII, 393 ff.

⁷⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁷⁶⁴ *Lov. Coll.*, A 17.

⁷⁶⁶ *LEt.*, II, 268.

⁷⁶⁷ This novel first appeared in serial form in *Le Pays*, July-October, 1854; next it was published by De Potter in 8 vols., 1856-57—the first four under the title *Les Petits Bourgeois*, and the last four called *Les Parvenus*. In 1870 the complete novel entered the *Comédie humaine*, éd. Michel Lévy, Vol. XI; it is now in *Con.*, Vol. XX, and contains only the portions written by Balzac and left unfinished.

was not begun before 1843. For this work, as for many of his others, he considered successive titles: *Gendres et belles-mères*, *Un Grand Artiste*, *Les Petits Bourgeois de Paris*, and finally the present title. Each is definitely related to a theme in the novel: the first tentative title emphasizes the marriage motif; the second reveals the character of Théodose de la Peyrade, of whom the author speaks as the "cousin germain de Tartuffe";⁷⁶⁸ the third was suggested by the publisher Hetzel in the hope that the title would give "une immense valeur de vente à l'œuvre."⁷⁶⁹ This last Balzac ultimately shortened to *Les Petits Bourgeois*; the composition is a satirical epic⁷⁷⁰ concerning the fairly well-to-do element of the lower Parisian bourgeoisie. It tells of Louis-Jérôme Thuillier and his sister, children of the concierge at the Ministry of Finance, both motivated by political and social ambitions. Céleste, the daughter of Louis-Jérôme, and her dowry are sought by Théodose de la Peyrade, called by the author "avocat des pauvres"⁷⁷¹ and "artiste en hypocrisie," who tries to win the good graces of the family by promising political advances to the father.⁷⁷²

Through the portrayal of social and political climbers and their dishonest intrigues and abuses—all staged against the background of the Latin quarter in old Paris—Balzac gave in this novel, as he said, "une scène de la vie parisienne."⁷⁷³ Although unfinished, *Les Petits Bourgeois* was, according to his instructions,⁷⁷⁴ ultimately classified in the Parisian series, where it obviously belongs, together with *Les Employés*, presenting the government group; *La Maison Nucingen*, the world of high finance; and *César Birotteau*, both big and small business.

Les Petites Misères de la vie conjugale,⁷⁷⁵ which the novelist wrote at different periods in his career, is a patchwork of short psychological analyses of human nature in general and married life in particular. Balzac

⁷⁶⁸ *Con.*, XX, 91.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁷⁶⁹ *LEt.*, II, 263.

⁷⁷¹ *Con.*, XX, 55.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 464 ff. At this point ends Balzac's manuscript as verified by M. Bouteon according to the material in the Lovenjoul Collection at Chantilly. The rest of the novel was written at the request of Mme Ève de Balzac by Charles Rabou, who, however, did not acknowledge his completion of the story. Rabou had collaborated with Balzac in the *Contes bruns*.

⁷⁷³ *LEt.*, II, 264.

⁷⁷⁴ *Lov. Coll.*, A 17.

⁷⁷⁵ This work was first published by Chlendorowski in 1 vol., in 1845; partial reprintings were made in 1846; the same year Roux and Cassanet published the whole composition in 3 vols. In 1855 it was classified and appeared in Vol. XVIII, éd. Houssiaux. It is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXXIII.

maintains that in married life, as in the life of society, the greatest evil comes from falsehood and unfaithfulness and that legal equality should be the basis of the association and foundation of the family. Marriage is considered as a social bond which places definite obligations upon both husband and wife. The author illustrates somewhat satirically the "miseries" a wife may inflict upon the husband and the cruelties he, in return, may impose. *Les Petites Misères*, like its companion work, *La Physiologie du mariage*, can hardly be called a "novel," since there is no plot, intrigue, or close delineation of character. The fragmentary form of the composition recalls the "monographs" and "codes" noted above and discussed in connection with *La Physiologie*. In compliance with the author's wishes *Les Petites Misères* was added posthumously (1855) to the "Etudes analytiques." The analytical nature of the two works—the search for principles underlying human behavior—amply fulfils Balzac's objectives for this division.

Balzac wrote only Part I of *Le Député d'Arcis*.⁷⁷⁶ Again at the request of Mme Ève de Balzac, Rabou completed the unfinished novel, and this time acknowledged his work. Our study, however, is concerned only with the part written by the novelist himself and now published in the Conard edition of the *Comédie humaine*, Volume XXI. This text also has been verified by M. Bouteron according to the manuscripts in the Lovenjoul Collection.

In *Le Député d'Arcis* the author depicted the political elections in the provinces and characterized the ambitious politicians who, like the provincial poet and nobleman, gravitated toward the capital. In this connection he stated in 1844: "Quant au mouvement politique, à l'ambition du député, c'est une Scène qui appartient aux *Scènes de la Vie politique*, ... elle est intitulée *le Député à Paris (le Député d'Arcis)*."⁷⁷⁷ The setting and the characters are intrinsically provincial; the emphasis is placed, as the novelist ironically said, upon "les splendeurs de la vie politique"⁷⁷⁸ and

⁷⁷⁶ Part I, "L'Election," was published in *L'Union monarchique*, April 7–May 3, 1847; Rabou inaccurately reprinted this in *Le Constitutionnel*, September–October, 1853; the same journal published Rabou's completion of the novel, October, 1853—January, 1854. The whole novel appeared in 13 vols., published by De Potter in 1854–55. In 1865 it was reprinted and added to Vol. XII of the *Comédie humaine* (1st ed.) by Mme Houssiaux. Next the story entered the Michel Lévy ed., Vol. XIII. Only Part I of the novel is now in *Con.*, Vol. XXI.

⁷⁷⁷ *OD.*, III, 568. Cf. *LEt.*, II, 93, 125. See also *Lov. Coll.*, A 17.

⁷⁷⁸ *Con.*, XXI, 286.

the procedure in the election of a deputy—in short, upon departmental politics and their effect on the community. Balzac was a severe critic of representative government and was opposed to the July Monarchy.⁷⁷⁹ He declared sarcastically “cette Scène est écrite pour l’enseignement des pays assez malheureux pour ne pas connaître les bienfaits d’une représentation nationale, et qui, par conséquent, ignorent par quelles guerres intestines, aux prix de quels sacrifices à la Brutus, une petite ville enfante un député!”⁷⁸⁰ This statement reflects Balzac’s unfortunate personal experience in taking an active part in politics and himself aspiring to the office of deputy; his defeat embittered him and fostered an ironic attitude toward the conduct of contemporary politics. On the basis of ideas and situations in Part I alone, *Le Député d’Arcis* is unquestionably a typical political scene and was rightfully assigned from the start to the category of the “Scènes de la vie politique.”

With these analyses we conclude our discussion of the additional eight compositions, even though three were left unfinished by the author. The grand total of stories in the *Comédie humaine*, therefore, has now risen from eighty-four to ninety-two.⁷⁸¹

Balzac’s literary career falls, as a whole, into definite periods, according to his partial or successive publications of the “Scènes” and the “Etudes”; there are, nevertheless, certain inevitable overlappings among these; this is particularly true in the case of his final period, which we date from 1845, when his classification was nearly complete. Our division has occasionally necessitated an anticipation of events. The close of the discussion now demands a review of those projects made concurrently with, and partly carried out in, the original Furne edition and its successors.

Although between 1843 and 1848 the novelist frequently referred in his letters⁷⁸² to a forthcoming second edition of his *Comédie humaine*, there was, in reality, no second edition prior to his death. But since throughout this period he was adding new novels and slightly modifying the distribution in tentative lists, there grew up later a sort of extension of the Furne, Dubochet, and Hetzel edition; this extension began in 1855 with the pub-

⁷⁷⁹ For a full discussion of Balzac’s political views, see Bernard Guyon, *Un Inédit de Balzac: “Le Catéchisme social” précédé de l’article “Du Gouvernement moderne.”*

⁷⁸⁰ *Con.*, XXI, 289.

⁷⁸¹ The *Echantillons de causeries françaises* has not been included because it is not a part of the *Comédie humaine*. Cf. *N.R.F.*, I, xiv.

⁷⁸² *LEt.*, II, 143; III, 42.

lication of Volume XVIII⁷⁸³ and was issued by Mme Houssiaux,⁷⁸⁴ who had bought out the firm noted above. The volume contained: *L'Initié* (*L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*), *Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin* (*Splendeurs et misères*), *Les Paysans*, and *Les Petites Misères de la vie conjugale*. This expansion, however, is not to be regarded in any way as a second edition.

During the same years (1843-48) Balzac indicated in successive lists of his works an increase in the number of volumes from the original sixteen (to which he had added a supplement, Vol. XVII) to the final twenty-six in the "Catalogue des ouvrages que contiendra *La Comédie humaine*."⁷⁸⁵ This "Catalogue" was first published by Amédée Achard in *L'Epoque*, May 22, 1845, and was again printed in *L'Assemblée nationale*,⁷⁸⁶ August 25, 1850, shortly after Balzac's death. The "Catalogue," drawn up in 1845, comprised, in all, the titles of one hundred and thirty-eight novels (in reality one hundred and thirty-seven, since there is an error in including *La Femme supérieure* twice), of which fifty-one were never finished. This study would be incomplete without a final consideration of these projects which, even though unfinished, were distributed among the divisions of the *Comédie humaine*: forty-two were designated for the "Etudes de mœurs"; five for the "Etudes philosophiques"; and four for the "Etudes analytiques." Within the "Etudes de mœurs" the distribution of projected stories in the first category was: *Les Enfants*, *Un Pensionnat de demoiselles*, *Intérieur de collège*, and *Gendres et belles-mères*;⁷⁸⁷ in the second: *Les Gens ridés*, *Une Actrice en voyage*, *L'Original*, *Les Héritiers Boirouge*,⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸³ *Bibliographie de la France* (1856).

⁷⁸⁴ She also published, between 1853 and 1855, a reprint of the 17 vols. of the original Furne ed., together with three supplementary volumes: XVIII, XIX, XX. See above, p. 132, n. 564.

⁷⁸⁵ *Con.*, I, xiv-xvi.

⁷⁸⁶ Here should be noted a few errors, doubtless misprints, in these publications. In *L'Epoque*, No. 7, read *La Danse* instead of *La Bourse*; No. 22, *Léonine*, should be *Honorine*. In *L'Assemblée nationale*, No. 19, *Le Ménage*, was a mistake for *Le Message*, and No. 24, *Gabrielle*, should be *Gobseck*. Both journals indicate a projected work, *Les Grands, l'hôpital et le peuple*, as actually published; under this title only a fragment appeared in 1846. The preceding errors are corrected in the *Histoire des œuvres* and in Vol. I, Conard ed., of the *Comédie humaine*; in the latter, nevertheless, we must note the date of Achard's reprinted article erroneously given as 1860 instead of 1850 (see *Con.*, I, xvi, n. 1).

⁷⁸⁷ This was a tentative title for *Les Petits Bourgeois*; see above, p. 169.

⁷⁸⁸ See above, pp. 127, 141.

and *Jacques de Metz*; in the third: *Les Grands, l'hôpital et le peuple*,⁷⁸⁹ *Une Vue du palais, Entre Savants*,⁷⁹⁰ and *Le Théâtre comme il est*;⁷⁹¹ in the fourth: *L'Histoire et le roman, Les Deux Ambitieux, L'Attaché d'ambassade*, and *Comment on fait un ministère*; the fifth category will be considered below; in the sixth are included only *Le Juge de paix* and *Les Environs de Paris*.

It is already obvious that, of the forty-two projected compositions for the "Etudes de mœurs," nineteen were planned for first, second, third, fourth, and sixth subdivisions, beginning with the "Scènes de la vie privée"; whereas the remaining twenty-three were all assigned to the fifth category, "Scènes de la vie militaire." Such apparent disproportion demands a more detailed treatment.

It has been shown, in Section III, that the inception of these never completed scenes dates from Balzac's historical projects of 1827. Early in his literary career he gathered material for the "Scènes de la vie militaire";⁷⁹² and in January, 1830, he even made an agreement with Mame for the publication of a projected novel, *La Bataille de Wagram*, which held a prominent place in his plans up to his last years but was never written. Le Breton believes, perhaps justly, that several of the projected stories for the series must have been sketched but were lost after the author's death by "la très négligente Madame Hanska."⁷⁹³ In confirmation of the critic's view there exist several brief jottings in Balzac's notebook concerning this project—titles, names of characters, and situations.

The contemplated extent of the series may be judged from the "Catalogue" noted above, in which are listed proposed titles for the "Scènes de

⁷⁸⁹ A fragment of this project was published in *Le Diable à Paris* (1846).

⁷⁹⁰ The beginning of this work was printed as "Une Rue de Paris et son habitant," in *Le Siècle*, July 28, 1845. It was reprinted by Chlendorowski in 1848, together with *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*, in 3 vols. The unfinished *Entre Savants* was published by Spoelberch de Lovenjoul in the *Annales politiques et littéraires*, May-June, 1901. See *La Comédie humaine*, éd. N.R.F., X, 1053.

⁷⁹¹ No. 68 in the catalogue of 1845, listed among the "Scènes de la vie parisienne." See *La Comédie humaine*, éd. N.R.F., X, 1055, where the title is erroneously indicated as a "Scène de la vie de province."

⁷⁹² M. Bouteron, "Un Conseiller de Balzac, le 1^{er} colonel Périolas," *RDM*, January 15, 1922, pp. 422-27. See also Arrigon, *Les Années romantiques*, pp. 206-8. Cf. *Corr. Carrand*, p. 298.

⁷⁹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 129, n. 1.

la vie militaire," from No. 82 to No. 106, inclusive. Of these, only two were written: *Les Chouans* and *Une Passion dans le désert*.⁷⁹⁴

Although the list of the projected military stories is lengthy, it is worth indicating here because it reveals the author's intended scope for the series, which was to cover the whole of Europe and Egypt as well: (1) *Les Soldats de la République*,⁷⁹⁵ (2) *L'Entrée en campagne*, (3) *Les Vendéens*,⁷⁹⁶ (4) *Le Prophète* and (5) *Le Pacha* under the general title *Les Français en Egypte*; (6) *L'Armée roulante*, (7) *La Garde consulaire*; under the general title *Sous Vienne*: (8) *Un Combat*, (9) *L'Armée assiégée*, and (10) *La Plaine de Wagram*; (11) *L'Aubergiste*, (12) *Les Anglais en Espagne*, (13) *Moscou*, (14) *La Bataille de Dresde*, (15) *Les Traînards*, (16) *Les Partisans*, (17) *Une Croisière*, (18) *Les Pontons*, (19) *La Campagne de France*, (20) *Le Dernier Champ de bataille*, (21) *L'Emir*, (22) *La Pénissière*, (23) *Le Corsaire algérien*. Some of these titles are strongly suggestive of certain stories within the *Comédie humaine*; for example, *Moscou* recalls *L'Adieu*, now among the philosophical tales; *La Bataille de Dresde* evokes *Le Colonel Chabert* of the private scenes. These projects show, in part, Balzac's desire to round out neglected categories. Had all these novels been written, their numbers would have more equally balanced those of the first three categories. Moreover, by completing the projected "Scènes de la vie militaire," the author would have developed the main interest and ideal of his life—Napoleon and his era.

Of the five proposed titles for the "Etudes philosophiques," two were partly carried out: *Le Phédon d'aujourd'hui*, now called *Martyrs ignorés, fragment du Phédon d'aujourd'hui*,⁷⁹⁷ and *La Vie et les aventures d'une idée*, known as *Aventures administratives d'une idée heureuse*.⁷⁹⁸ The remaining three—*Le Président Fritot*, *Le Philanthrope*, and *Le Nouvel Abeilard*—were never written.

The titles of the four projected compositions for the "Etudes analytiques"—*Anatomie des corps enseignants*, *Pathologie de la vie sociale*, *Monographie de la vertu*, and *Dialogue philosophique et politique sur la perfection du XIX^e siècle*—show a similarity to the short studies (noted

⁷⁹⁴ See above, pp. 162 ff.

⁷⁹⁵ Planned in three parts.

⁷⁹⁶ In regard to this work, on the flyleaf of Vol. I of the corrected Furne ed., Balzac made this notation: "*Les Vendéens feront un Vol. 14 avec Les Chouans*" (Lov. Coll., A 17).

⁷⁹⁷ OD., I, 351. See also *Etudes philosophiques*, éd. Werdet, Vol. XII (1837).

⁷⁹⁸ OD., I, 339. A fragment was published in *Les Causeries du monde* (1837).

above), the "monographs," "pathologies," and "codes." Apparently they, too, were intended to illustrate the basic social principles—Balzac's objective for the third main division of the *Comédie humaine*—and with them closes our discussion of Balzac's unfinished works. It should be added that this "Catalogue," naturally, did not include the novels composed between 1845 and 1848.

It now behooves the writer to recapitulate the changes⁷⁹⁹ made during the final period in the distribution of novels really written and published. The changes between the Furne first edition and the "Catalogue" were the following: (1) *Le Père Goriot*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Messe de l'athée*, *L'Interdiction*, and *Pierre Grassou*—all "Scènes de la vie parisienne"—were to become "Scènes de la vie privée"; (2) *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine* was to be shifted from the "Scènes de la vie politique" to the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; *Le Cabinet des antiques*, originally grouped with *La Vieille Fille* under the common title *Les Rivalités*, was now to appear under a new designation, *Les Provinciaux à Paris*.

In 1846 Balzac drew up a new prospectus⁸⁰⁰ which was practically a reprint of 1845 but to which he added what proved to be his final directions, to the following effect: *Pierre Grassou*—after a tentative inclusion in the "Scènes de la vie privée," in which it was, in fact, never published—was to remain in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne"; *Le Lys dans la vallée* was to be shifted from the "Scènes de la vie de province" to the "Scènes de la vie de campagne"; *Un Ménage de garçon en province* was to become *La Rabouilleuse*; *Les Frères de la consolation* should bear the title *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*.

The Michel Lévy edition⁸⁰¹ of the *Comédie humaine*, said to be definitive, claimed to be based on the corrected Furne; but in reality the distribution of novels follows in part that of the uncorrected Furne, in part that of the "Catalogue" (1845), and in part the prospectus (1846). According to the line-up in the "Catalogue," *Le Lys* still remained, in the Lévy edition, in the "Scènes de la vie de province"; *Le Cabinet des antiques* was placed under the common title *Les Provinciaux à Paris*; and the recommended shiftings of *Le Père Goriot*, *L'Interdiction*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, and *La Messe de l'athée* were also carried out. On the other hand, the classification of *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine* in the "Scènes de la

⁷⁹⁹ The reasons for these changes were given above in the analyses of the novels in question.

⁸⁰⁰ *N.R.F.*, I, xix.

⁸⁰¹ *OC.*, Vols. I–XVII (1869–76).

vie politique" follows the uncorrected Furne edition rather than Balzac's later directions; whereas *Pierre Grassou* remained in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" according to the prospectus of 1846 and the corrected Furne. These circumstances confirm our view that the publishers, Michel and Calmann-Lévy, did not utilize in full the corrected Furne, as is generally believed.

The Conard edition of the *Comédie humaine*,⁸⁰² which contains, in all, ninety-two stories, is regarded as both critical and definitive, since the text and the classification of novels have been revised on the basis of the corrected Furne and in keeping with Balzac's final directions. *Le Lys dans la vallée* is placed in the "Scènes de la vie de campagne," *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine* in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne," and *Le Cabinet des antiques* appears again under the original common title, *Les Rivalités*.

A brief summary of this section will emphasize several definite points: (1) Eight compositions were added⁸⁰³ to the *Comédie humaine*, of which three, although left unfinished, contained, nonetheless, certain features which determined the placement of the stories; (2) fifty-one works projected for the three main divisions show the wider scope contemplated by the author for certain categories within his *Comédie humaine*; (3) the problem of classification was in Balzac's mind to the last; (4) six novels underwent reclassification during the final period.

VIII. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The main problem of this investigation has been to trace systematically the history of the publication of Balzac's novels in order to discover whether or not the scheme of his *Comédie humaine* was the result of an evolutionary development. As a corollary, it has been necessary to follow up his method of distribution of stories and to seek within the texts reasons for classification and later reclassification of certain novels.

In considering the above problem it was shown that (1) suggestions of Balzac's general plan are found as early as 1822 in the Preface to *Le Vicaire des Ardennes*, and again in 1827 in the "Avertissement" to *Le Gars*; that (2) the novelist's intentions have become clearer by 1829, when, in his "Avis" to *Les Chouans*, he designated this novel as a cornerstone for

⁸⁰² Vols. I-XXXIII (1912-28).

⁸⁰³ In 1848, *La Cousine Bette*, *Le Cousin Pons*; in 1855, *L'Initié*, *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*, *Les Paysans*, and *Les Petites Misères de la vie conjugale*; in 1865, *Le Député d'Arcis*; in 1870, *Les Petits Bourgeois*.

future construction; that (3) definite stages of progress are reached in 1830, with the *Scènes de la vie privée*, from which later grew the "Etudes de mœurs" (1833-37), and again in 1831 with the *Romans et contes philosophiques*, from which later arose the "Etudes philosophiques" (1836-40); that (4) these developments became the original two main sections of the all-inclusive *Comédie humaine* (1842-48), with its final threefold division embracing ninety-two stories. The instances cited establish concrete forms in the inception of the plan and indicate gradual growth in these successive publications.

The scientific basis which underlies Balzac's work consists of two major principles—unity in fundamental nature and environment as a determining factor in the development of species. This theory inspired Balzac to place man in the scale of biological development as a zoölogical and sociological being subject to social laws and dependent upon them as is an animal upon laws of nature; and, consequently, to explain social laws through analogy with the biological. As a scientist observes effects, finds causes, and deduces principles, so Balzac sought to discern those three factors in society; these served as the bases for his three main divisions: "Etudes de mœurs," "Etudes philosophiques," "Etudes analytiques." His scientific beliefs, corroborated by his observations of society, took concrete form in novels arranged in still smaller groupings. Throughout the "Etudes de mœurs," conceived in terms of space—province, Paris, country—and in social circumstances of private, political, and military life, prevails the idea that trades, professions, and environment mold man into species. Here the author approximates deterministic philosophy. The "Etudes philosophiques" and the "Etudes analytiques" had no formal subdivisions. Yet, in the material included, the general drive tended, in the second category, toward considering exaggeration of thought and sentiment as a cause for mental disorder, and, in the third category, toward deducing principles which govern human behavior. The last category suffered comparative neglect. Between 1830 and 1833 two groupings comprise thirty-two stories and represent two major types of fiction: contemporary mores and philosophical tales; from 1833 to 1840 was noted a wider scope in the increased number of stories—fifty in all; the period between 1842 and 1848 marks the peak in the development of the scheme of grouping and is manifest in eighty-four works, and finally in ninety-two.

It has also been shown that the idea of grouping the stories was conceived early, and with it arose the problem of classification which dominated the mind of the author from 1833 to his last year. A careful pe-

rusal of his letters, prefaces, and introductions and a thorough analysis of each grouping and of the texts of stories have revealed two chief reasons as governing classification: one, of practical necessity, when Balzac yielded to the exigencies of publishing firms which required a definite number of pages for separate volumes; and the other, logical, artistic, or sociophilosophical, in which preference was given to similarity of themes, ideas, characters, episodes, and setting. Furthermore, it became evident in the course of this study that the original paucity and subsequent increase in the quantity of novels occasioned a good deal of reclassification. Of the ninety-two stories included in the first edition of the *Comédie humaine*, twenty-two⁸⁰⁴ underwent a change in position: thirteen⁸⁰⁵ were reclassified once and nine twice before final appropriate placement. The latter group includes: *Madame Firmiani*, *Etude de femme*, *La Messe de l'athée*, *L'Interdiction*, *Gobseck*, *La Grande Bretèche* (*Autre Etude de femme*), *Le Message*, *Une Double Famille*, and *La Bourse*. The last five were ultimately restored to their first setting, "Scènes de la vie privée," after having been used as "fillers" in the "Scènes de la vie parisienne" and in the "Scènes de la vie de province." The remaining seventeen of the twenty-two stories were permanently removed from their original classifications. The time element of these peregrinations is self-explanatory, for it was during the publication of the two major series, both marking steps in the progress of the author's plan, that they occurred—namely, from 1833 to 1840 and from 1842 to 1848.

Moreover, it has been shown in the course of this investigation that the temporary classification of eleven stories (*Une Double Famille*, *Etude de femme*, *Le Message*, *Adieu*, *Madame Firmiani*, *La Femme abandonnée*, *La Grenadière*, *L'Interdiction*, *La Messe de l'athée*, *Une Passion dans le désert*, and *Le Lys dans la vallée*) was explained by practical reasons, and the reasons were couched in typical statements which have been cited from Balzac's letters.⁸⁰⁶ Later, when the exigencies no longer existed, these eleven, together with other tales, were permanently classified (as were the seventy that never changed their original positions) in the light of common elements and in harmony with the intentions expressed for

⁸⁰⁴ On the diagram (p. 180) are listed the twenty-two stories with their successive shifts.

⁸⁰⁵ *La Grenadière*, *La Femme abandonnée*, *Le Père Goriot*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *Le Curé de Tours*, *Facino Cane*, *Sarrasine*, *Une Passion dans le désert*, *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*, *La Recherche de l'absolu*, *Les Marana*, *Adieu*, *Le Lys dans la vallée*.

⁸⁰⁶ See above, pp. 56, 104.

CLASSIFICATION AND SUCCESSIVE SHIFTS OF TWENTY-TWO STORIES

Name of Story	Scènes de la vie privée, 1830-32	Romans et contes philosophiques: Nouveaux contes, 1831-33	Etudes de mœurs, 1833-37	Etudes philosophiques, 1836-	Charpentier, 1839	Comédie humaine, 1842-48	Catalogue, 1845	Prospectus, 1846; Corrected Furne	Lévy	Conard
<i>La Bourse</i>	Privée	Nouveaux contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Une Double Famille</i>	Privée	Nouveaux contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Madame Firmiani</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Etude de femme</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Le Message</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>La Grenadière</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>La Femme abandonnée</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Gobseck</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Le Père Goriot</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Le Colonel Chabert</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>La Messe de l'altée</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>L'Interdiction</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>La Grande Breteche</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Le Curé de Tours</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Facino Cane</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Sarrasine</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Une Passion dans le désert</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Province"	.....	"Province"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>La Recherche de l'absolu</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Les Marana</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Adieu</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Le Lys dans la vallée</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"
<i>Pierre Grassou*</i>	Privée	Romans et contes	"Paris"	.....	"Paris"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"	"Privée"

* Although indicated in this table, *Pierre Grassou* is not included in the twenty-two stories because it was never in reality published in the "Scènes de la vie privée." See above, p. 176.

each special category. An exact weighing of factors in the final classification of these twenty-two novels warrants the ultimate disposition of all but three: *Le Colonel Chabert* and *Le Père Goriot* in the "Scènes de la vie privée," and *Le Lys dans la vallée* in the "Scènes de la vie de campagne." The placement of these must be left an open question, since it depended on the author's subjective choice in which at one time certain features of the story, more than others, exercised a stronger appeal.

As an outcome of this systematic and chronological study of Balzac's works, the writer is led to believe that the scheme of the *Comédie humaine* is the result of a slow and evolutionary development. An exhaustive examination of the texts of novels usually in their first editions has revealed that Balzac's guiding principles for classification were, primarily and in the last analysis, artistic, logical, or sociophilosophical. Three stories alone militate against this conclusion—cases which must remain debatable, since factors determining the varied classification of these stories are in no instance mutually exclusive.

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